THE MELANCHOLY of HARUHI SUZUMIYA

16

ART BY GAKU TSUGANO

STORY BY NAGARU TANIGAWA

CHARACTERS BY: NOIZI ITO

Kadokawa Comics A

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Yen Press

When a classmate notices that her dog is acting strangely on their daily walks, she asks the SOS Brigade to take on the case—a request Haruhi is more than happy to oblige! After all, any number of supernatural phenomena could be determining local dogs from a particular area along the riverbank!

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WAAAAA (CHEER)
CLASS FIVE'S GONNA WIN, NO QUES-TION.
THE GIRLS IN OUR CLASS ARE CRAZY STRONG.
AAA
YEAH.
WELL, THEY'VE GOT HER, AFTER ALL.
BAAN (BAM)
AND THAT'S THE GAME!!

16
THE MELANCHOLY of
HARUHI SUZUMIYA
ORIGINAL STORY
NAGARU TANIGAWA
MANGA
GAKU TSUGANO
CHARACTER DESIGN:
NOIZI ITO

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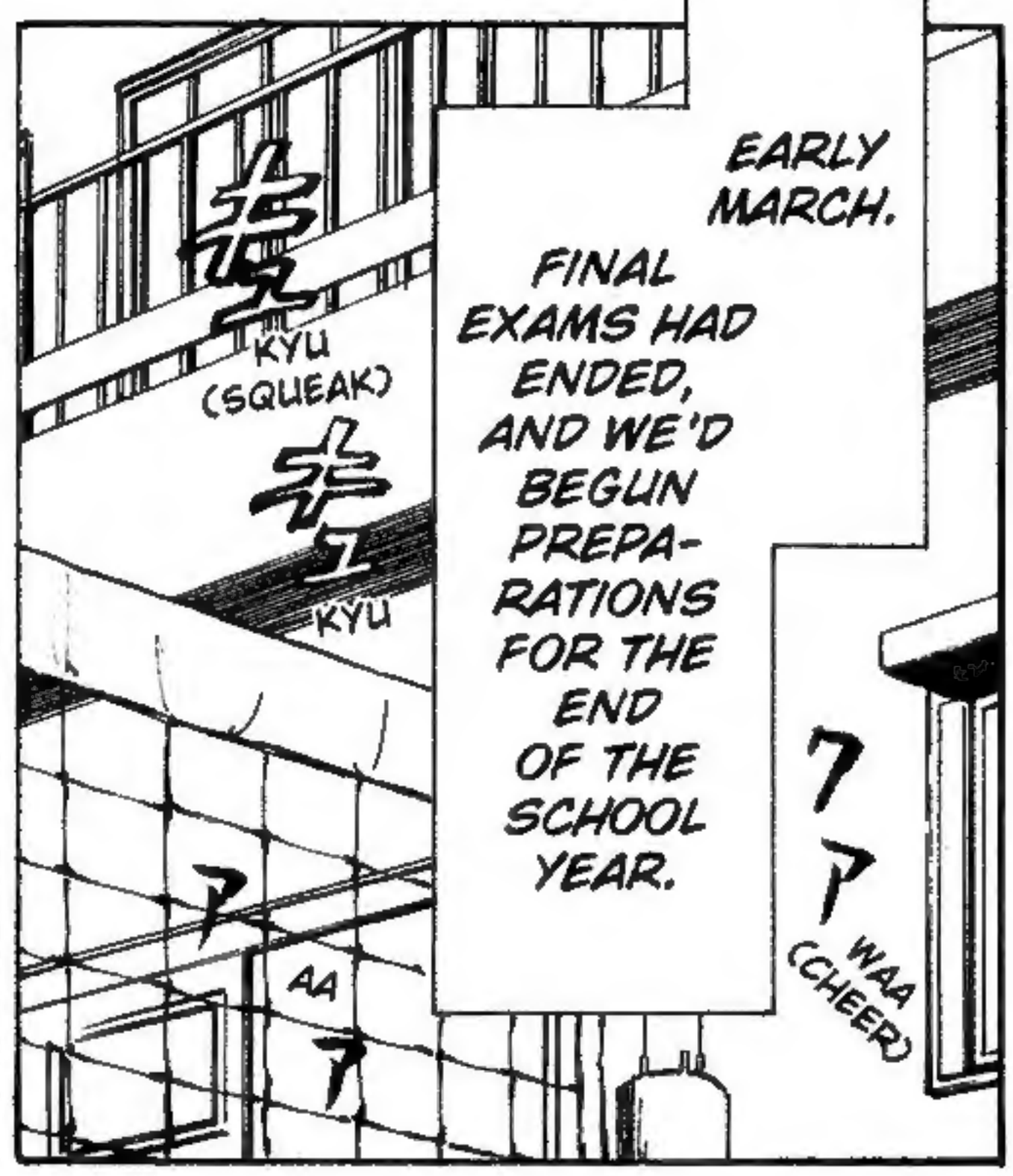
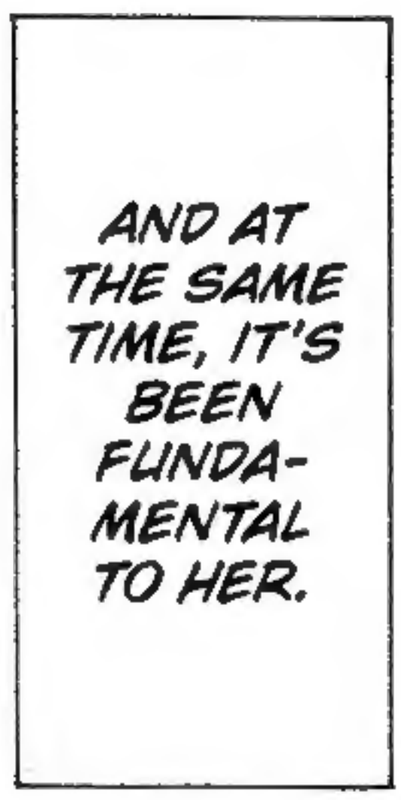
WAAAAA (CHEER)
KYU (SQUEAK)
AS I'M SURE YOU'VE GUESSED, THERE WAS A TOURNAMENT HAPPENING.
I WONDER WHY SHE DOESN'T JOIN ONE OF THE SPORTS CLUBS.
SHE'S IN THE SOS BRIGADE.
IT'S JUST LIKE HARUHI, ISN'T IT?
TALENT LIKE HERS ISN'T EXACTLY COMMON.
KYU
KYU
KYU
HARD TO IMAGINE HER DOING ANYTHING LIKE A NORMAL STUDENT.
SHE'S BEEN THE SAME SINCE MIDDLE SCHOOL.
THESE DAYS, HER FAVORITE THING TO DO IS GET UP TO INCOMPREHENSIBLE GAMES WITH YOU, KYON.
I'M NOT IN THE MOOD TO REFUTE HIM.
KYU
KYU
KYU

KYU
AAA
I WAS PRETTY SURE THIS PAST YEAR HAD BEEN FUN FOR HER, AT LEAST.
I BET HARUHI'S PLANNING TO BE IN THE SEAT BEHIND MINE THIS YEAR TOO.
KYU


EARLY MARCH.
FINAL EXAMS HAD ENDED, AND WE'D BEGUN PREPA-RATIONS FOR THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.
KYU (SQUEAK)
KYU
AA
WAA (CHEER)


AND AT THE SAME TIME, IT'S BEEN FUNDA-MENTAL TO HER.

THE SOS BRIGADE'S BEEN GOOD FOR HER.

I COULD TELL JUST BY LOOKING AT HER.

SHE HADN'T GOTTEN BETTER IN HIGH SCHOOL SO MUCH AS SHE'D RETURNED TO HER NORMAL SELF.
AAA
AAA
IT WAS MIDDLE SCHOOL WHEN SHE'D HAD SUCH TROUBLE.

WHEN THE NEXT SCHOOL YEAR STARTED, I WANTED TO HAVE THE SEAT IN FRONT OF HERS.

KYU

I MIGHT AS WELL COME RIGHT OUT AND SAY IT.

KYU

KYU

IS THAT A PARA-DOX?

ON THE OTHER HAND, I WONDERED IF MAYBE THAT WOULDN'T BE SO BAD.

WAAAAA

IF WE GOT SPLIT UP, IT'D BE PRETTY DISORIENT-ING...

WAAAAA

JUST SO LONG AS HARUHI'S INCREDIBLE POWER STAYED CALM, THAT WAS ENOUGH.

KYU

KYU

ARE YOU STILL DWELLING ON GETTING YOUR BUTT KICKED AT SOCCER?

YOU'RE ACTING WEIRD. FIRST YOU WERE SMILING, AND NOW YOU'RE ALL SERIOUS.

WHAT'S YOUR PROB-LEM?

I WAS THINKING IT WOULD BE NICE TO BRING THINGS BACK AROUND TO THE BEGIN-NING.

INDEED. IT'LL SOON BE A YEAR SINCE WE ALL MET.

NOW THAT REALLY TAKES ME BACK.

...THAT PHRASE HAS A NICE RING TO IT.

I HAVEN'T LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO BE LOOKING BACK ON THE PAST, BUT...

BACK TO THE BEGIN-NING, EH?

IT FELT PRETTY NICE.

AND IT WOULD HAVE BEEN NICE IF THINGS COULD HAVE ENDED THAT WAY.

EVERY-ONE WAS RELAXING A BIT AFTER THE TIRING TOURNA-MENT.

IT WAS A LOVELY, PRE-SPRING AFTER-NOON.

ギィ...

GII (CREAK)

BACK TO THE BEGIN-NING.
IS THIS THE SOS BRIGADE?
UM... EXCUSE ME.
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT WHEN I HEARD ABOUT THE CASE THE CLIENT BROUGHT.
THAT'S RIGHT, A CASE.
NO ONE HAD ARRANGED FOR THIS TO HAPPEN.

PAA (BEAM)

GHOSTS !?

YES.

IT'S A RUMOR IN MY NEIGHBOR-HOOD.

THAT THERE ARE... GHOSTS, MAYBE.

IT'S ONLY RECENTLY THAT THE STORY STARTED. MAYBE THREE DAYS AGO.

I'D BEEN THINKING SOME-THING WEIRD WAS HAPPEN-ING...

I'D LOVE TO HEAR THE DETAILS!

YOU'RE ABSO-LUTELY SURE THEY'RE GHOSTS, RIGHT?

I'M NOT POSITIVE.

IT JUST SEEMS... GHOST-ISH?

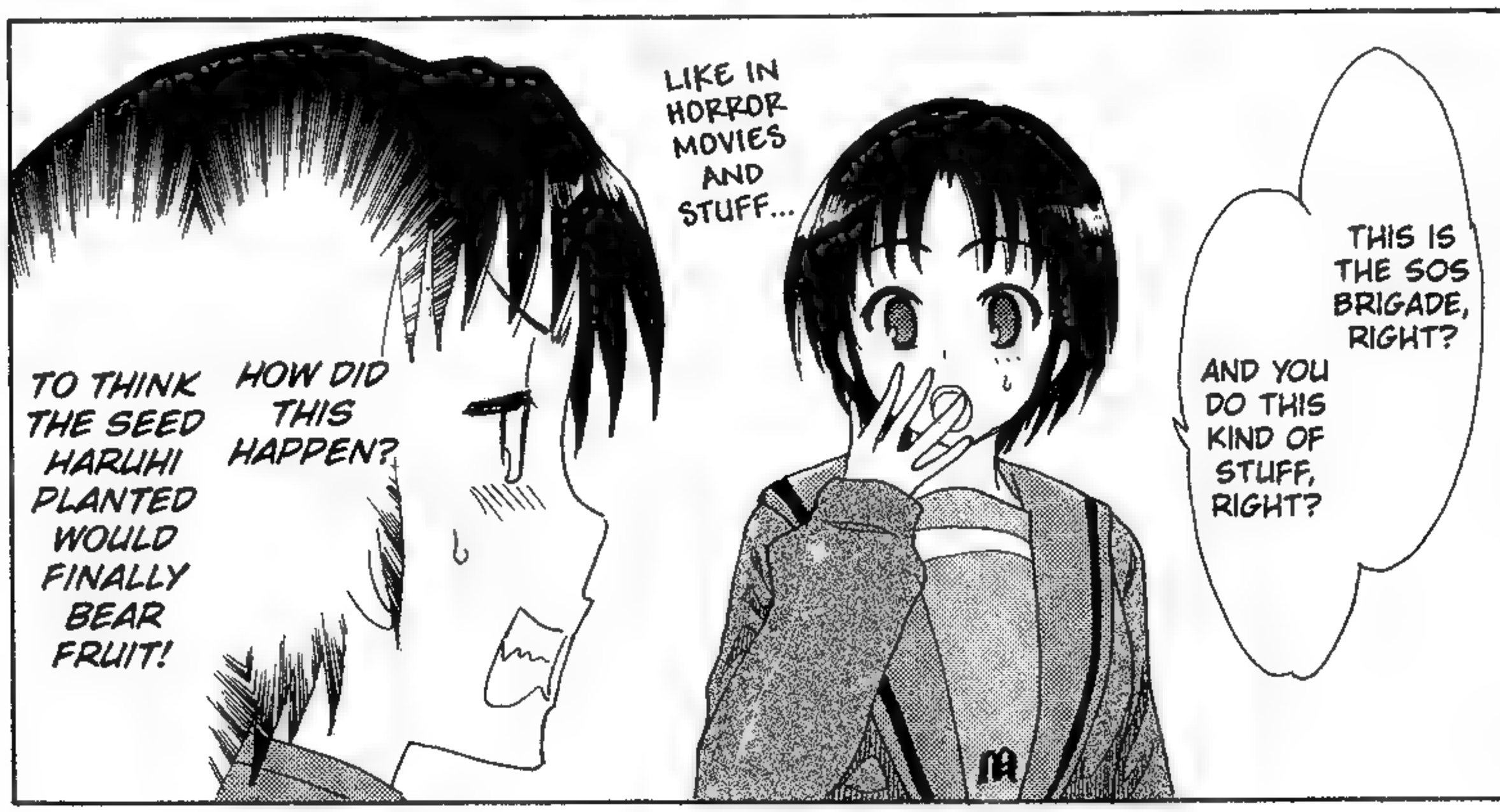
I MEAN, IT'S JUST A RUMOR.

DURING THE VOLLEYBALL TOURNEY, I THOUGHT SHE MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE SETTER WHO'D SUPPORTED HARUHI VERY WELL.
NOT AT ALL!
UM, MAYBE IT'S TOO MUCH TROUBLE...
SAKA-NAKA... I DON'T REMEMBER HER FIRST NAME.

BUT NOBODY HAD RISEN UP TO TAKE HER PLACE.
OR RATHER, WHO'D LEFT THE BIGGEST IMPRESSION IN CLASS FIVE HAD BEEN ASAKURA.
TO BE HONEST, SHE HADN'T MADE MUCH OF AN IMPRESSION ON ME IN CLASS.
I DON'T CARE IF IT'S AN EVIL SPIRIT OR NOT!
BUT OUR INTRA-CLASS DISTANCE FROM HER DIDN'T MATTER ONE BIT.
WE'LL GO ANY-WHERE!

FLYER: SOS BRIGADE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. WE, THE SOS BRIGADE, ARE SEARCHING FOR THE WORLD'S MYSTERIES. PEOPLE WHO'VE EXPERIENCED MYSTERIOUS PHENOMENA IN THE PAST, ARE CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING MYSTERIOUS PHENOMENA, OR PLAN TO EXPERIENCE MYSTERIOUS PHENOMENA IN THE FUTURE SHOULD COME TO US FOR A CONSULTATION. WE WILL HELP YOU FIND RESOLUTION.

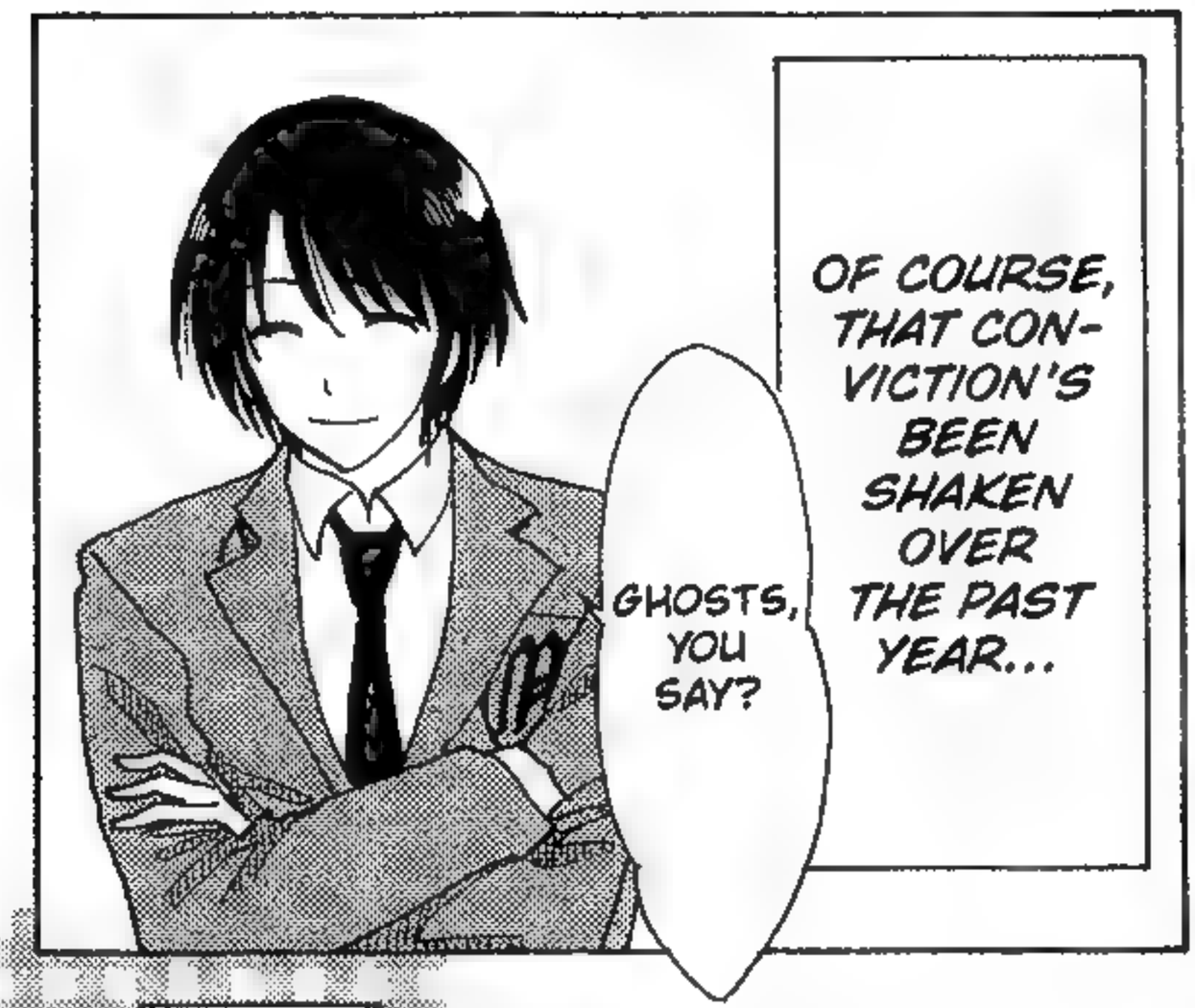
SFX: GOSO (RUMMAGE)



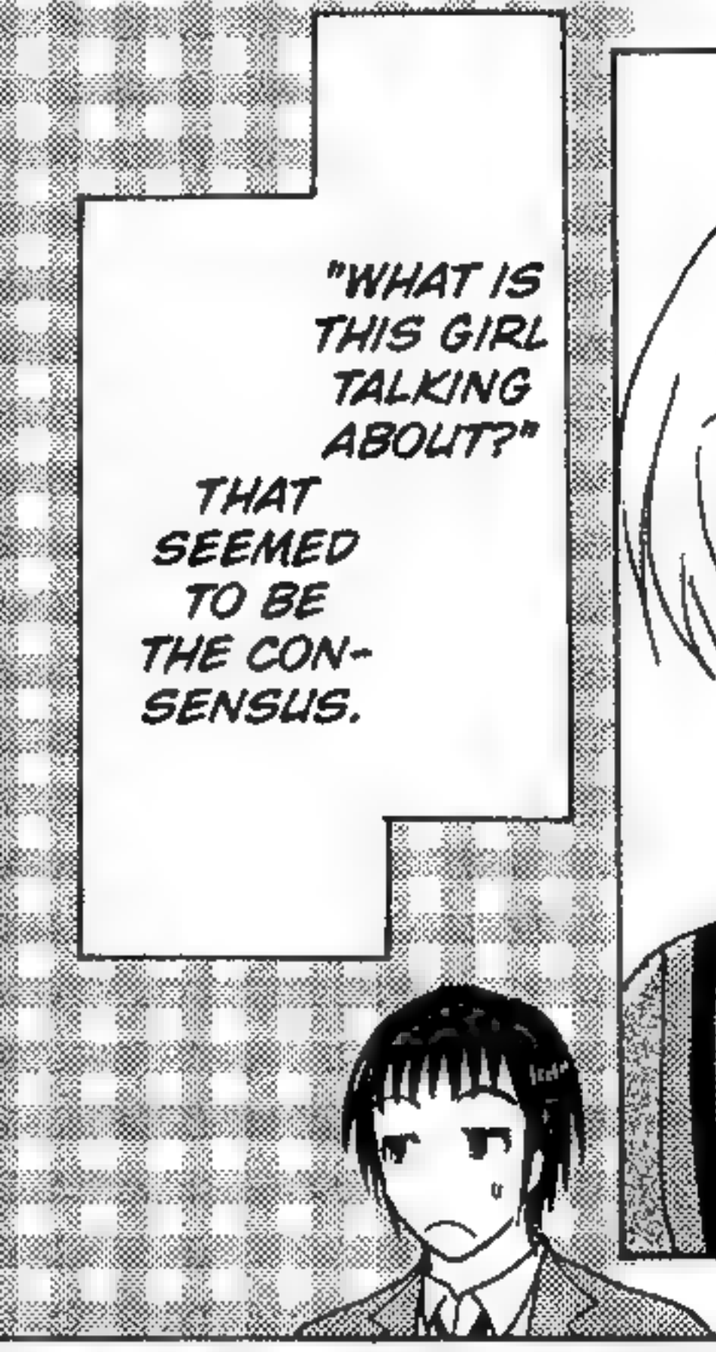
I KNEW THOSE FLYERS WERE A GOOD IDEA!
KAA (ROAR)
PEOPLE ARE PAYING ATTEN-TION!
BA (BUM)
BA
BAN
I TOLD YOU, KYON!
WE DON'T HAVE ANYBODY WHO SPECIAL-IZES IN HORROR ...
SORRY, SAKA-NAKA.

WE'RE GONNA NEED A VIDEO CAMERA FOR INTER-VIEWS.
BUT BEFORE WE DO THAT, WE'LL NEED TO HEAR EVERYTHING ABOUT THEM.
THE LAST THING WE'LL DO IS BANISH THEM.
CHEER UP!
WE'LL TAKE YOUR CASE ON FOR FREE.

FOR HER, THE GREATEST REWARD WAS THE FACT OF HAVING A MYSTERY TO SOLVE AT ALL.
I DON'T KNOW FOR SURE THAT IT'S A GHOST...
I WAS CERTAIN THAT NO MATTER WHO CAME TO US WITH A CASE, HARUHI WOULD NEVER ASK FOR MONEY.


OF COURSE, THAT CONVICTION'S BEEN SHAKEN OVER THE PAST YEAR...
GHOSTS, YOU SAY?

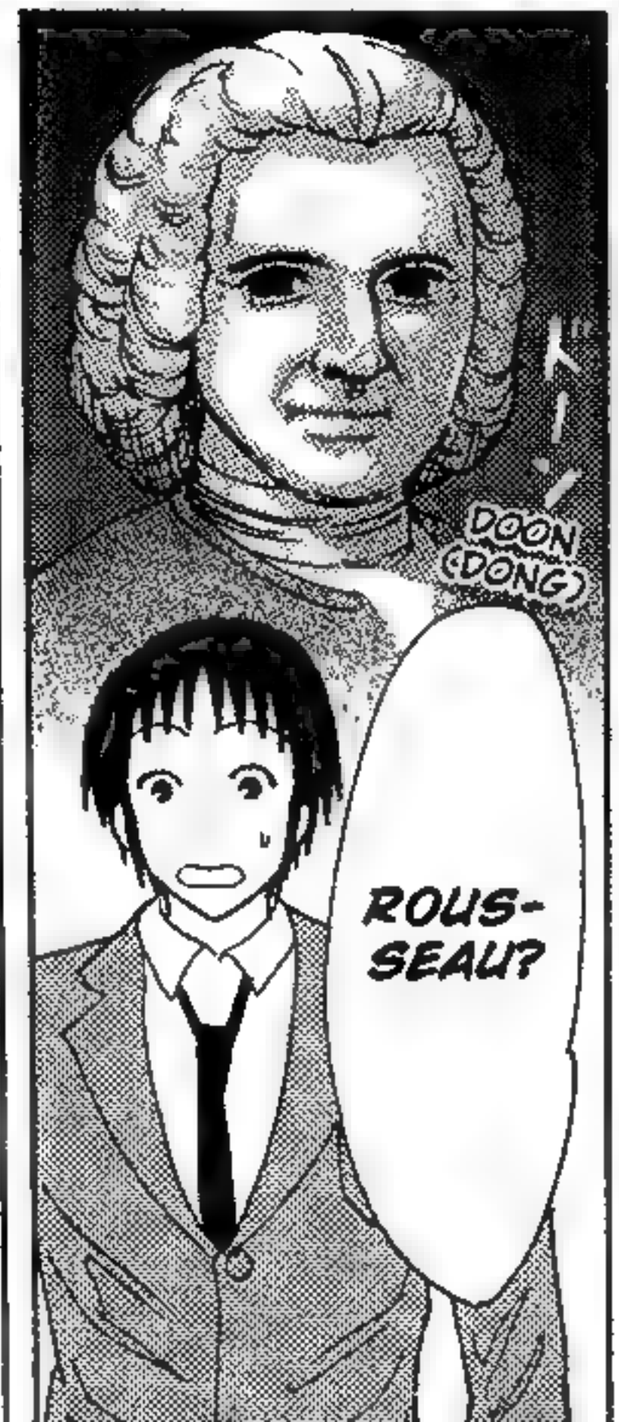
TO BE CLEAR, I DON'T BELIEVE IN GHOSTS.
DORO (WOOO)
DORO
DORO
DORO


"WHAT IS THIS GIRL TALKING ABOUT?"
THAT SEEMED TO BE THE CONSENSUS.

.....

UM...
DOES THAT MEAN...?

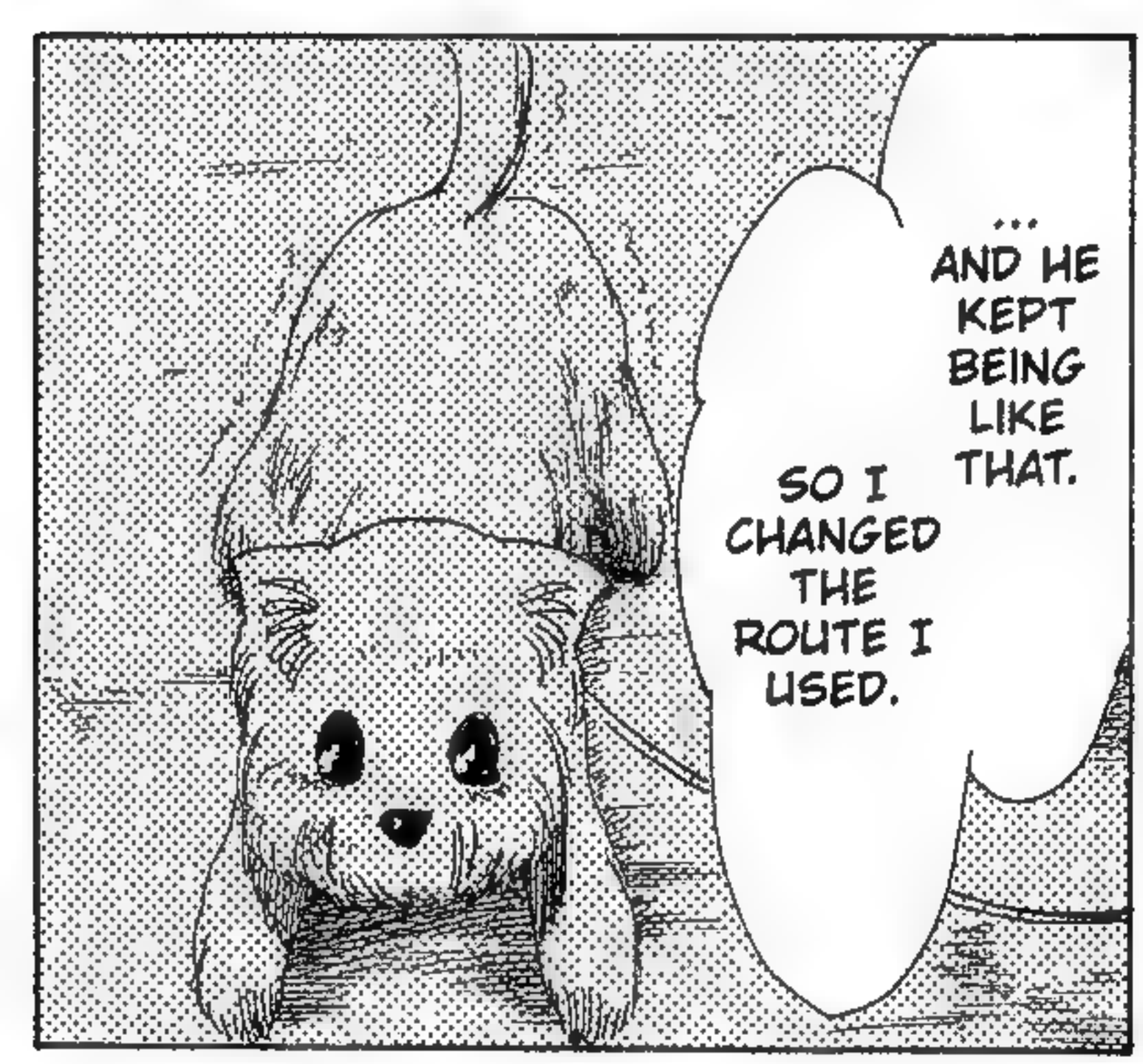
YOUR DOG'S GOT A HECK OF A NAME.
THAT'S MY DOG.


DOON (DONG)
ROUSSEAU?

THE FIRST ONE TO NOTICE ANYTHING STRANGE WAS ROUSSEAU.

KYON, SHUT UP.
DOES THAT REALLY MATTER?
WHEN I FIRST GOT HIM, I USED TO TAKE HIM ON ALL SORTS OF DIFFERENT ROUTES.
BUT NOW I DO THE SAME WALK EVERY TIME...

WE ALWAYS TAKE THE SAME ROUTE.
I TAKE HIM FOR A WALK EVERY MORNING AND EVENING.


...
AND HE KEPT BEING LIKE THAT.
SO I CHANGED THE ROUTE I USED.

HE WOULDN'T WALK IT, EVEN WHEN I PULLED THE LASH.
ABOUT A WEEK AGO, ROUSSEAU STARTED HATING THAT PATH.

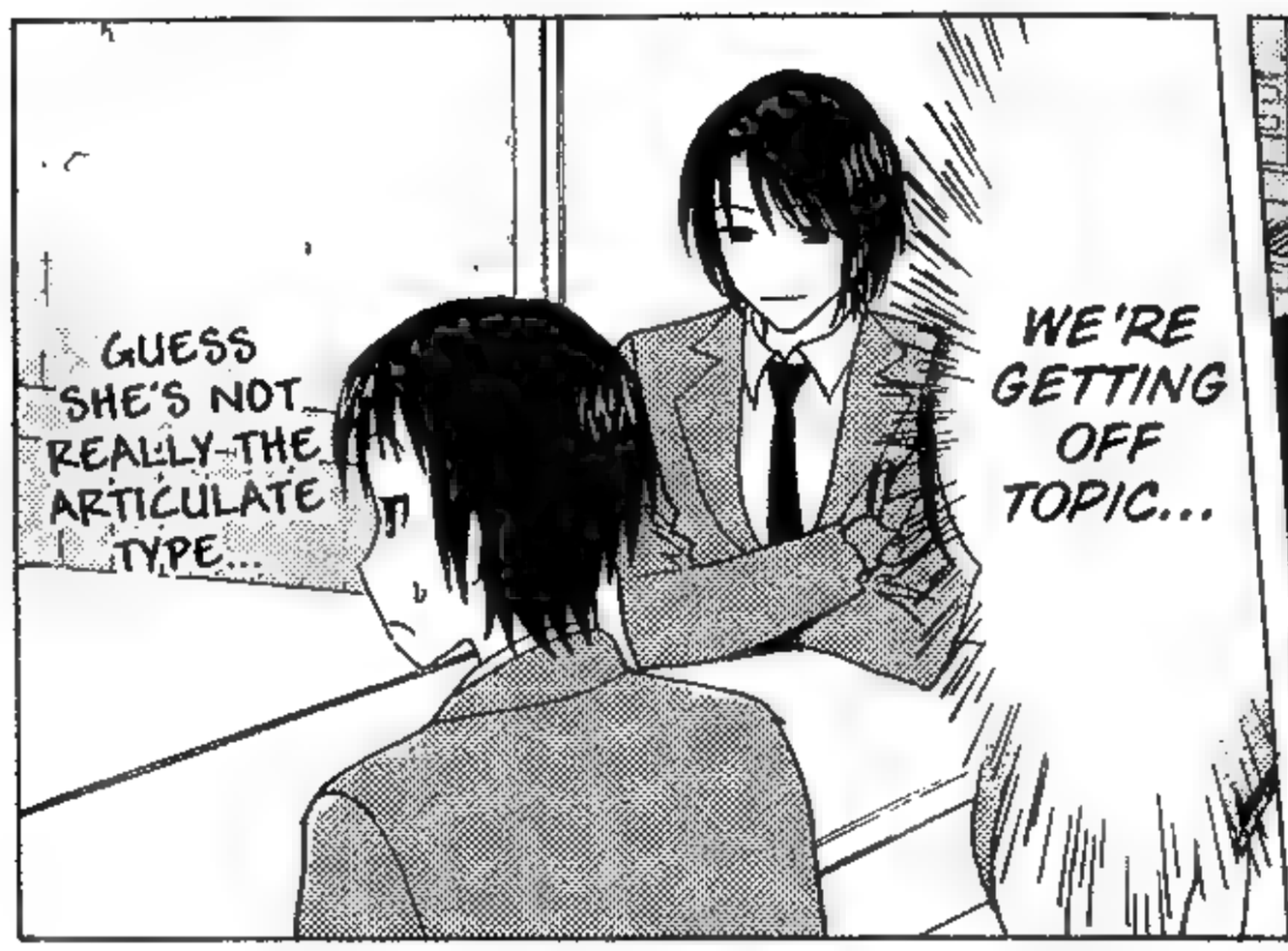
IT'S JUST A RUMOR.
LIKE I SAID, I DON'T KNOW IF THERE ARE ANY!

SO YOUR DOG WITH THE PHILOS-OPHER'S NAME SUDDENLY HATES HIS WALKING ROUTE.
SO WHAT ABOUT THE GHOSTS !?

YES.
I DIDN'T FEEL ANY-THING WEIRD.

UM, SO...
THE HUMANS ARE FINE?

LOTS OF PEOPLE HAVE DOGS IN MY NEIGH-BORHOOD.
SHE HAS TWO SHELTIES.
SHE NOTICED DURING HER WALK.
THE FIRST WAS MRS. ANAN.

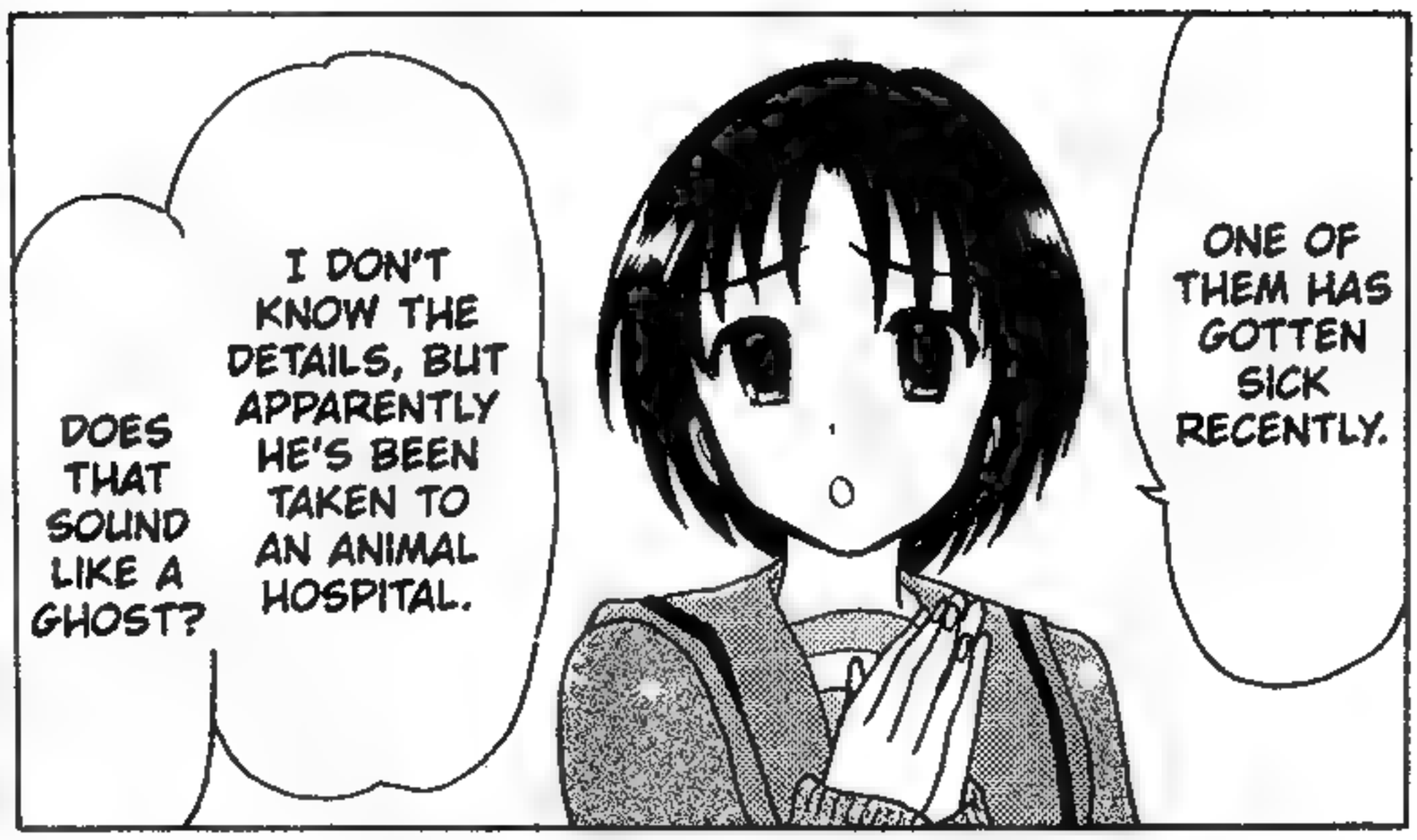

GUESS SHE'S NOT REALLY THE ARTICULATE TYPE...
WE'RE GETTING OFF TOPIC...

ANYWAY, NONE OF THE NEIGH-BORHOOD DOGS WILL GO NEAR THAT AREA.
AND I DON'T SEE ANY STRAY CATS THERE EITHER.

...THE HECK?
THAT'S RIGHT.
THERE'S ALSO THIS GIRL NAMED HIGUCHI, WHO HAS A BUNCH OF DOGS.

SARA (SKRTCH)
SARA
I SEE, I SEE.
SO IT'S SOMETHING ONLY ANIMALS CAN SEE.

HMM, WELL ...

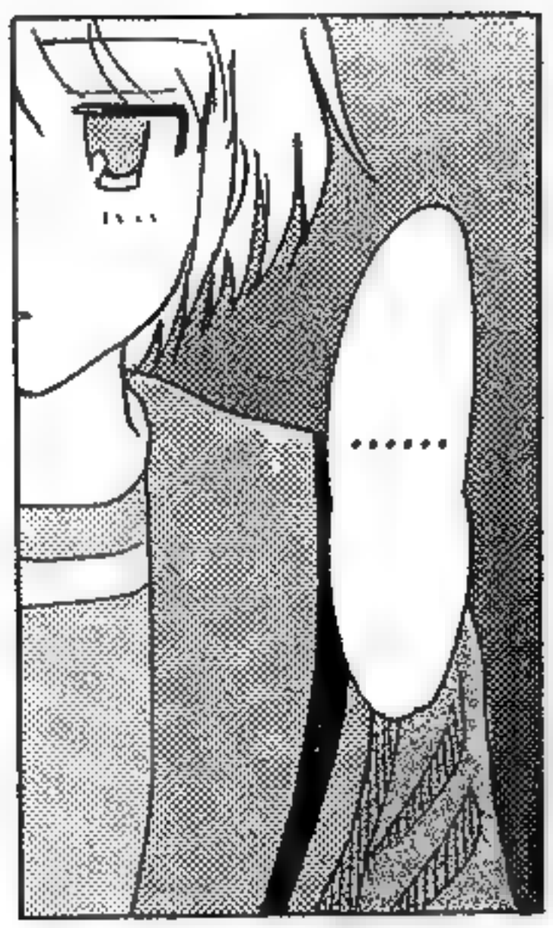

DOES THAT SOUND LIKE A GHOST?
I DON'T KNOW THE DETAILS, BUT APPARENTLY HE'S BEEN TAKEN TO AN ANIMAL HOSPITAL.
ONE OF THEM HAS GOTTEN SICK RECENTLY.

MAYBE MR. WHATEVER'S MUTT SAW A GHOST, GOT SICK, THEN PASSED OUT FROM THE SHOCK.
BUT, THERE'S A DEFINITE POSSIBILITY IT IS.
DON'T CALL IT A MUTT.

AT PRESENT, I CAN'T BE SURE.

BA (BAM)
OF COURSE.
WE SHOULD HEAD TO THE SCENE IMME-DIATELY!
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING THERE THAT'S SPOOKING THE ANIMALS.
LIKE A GHOST, GHOUL, OR DEMON!

ANYWAY... I'VE GOT THE GIST OF THINGS.
THAT'S ENOUGH.



SFX: GOGO (RUMBLE) GOGO GOGO GOGO

SO WHAT IS IT?

I'LL JUST SAY UP FRONT THAT THERE'S NOTHING OBVIOUS THAT COMES TO MIND WHEN I HEAR THE WORD "GHOST."
YES?

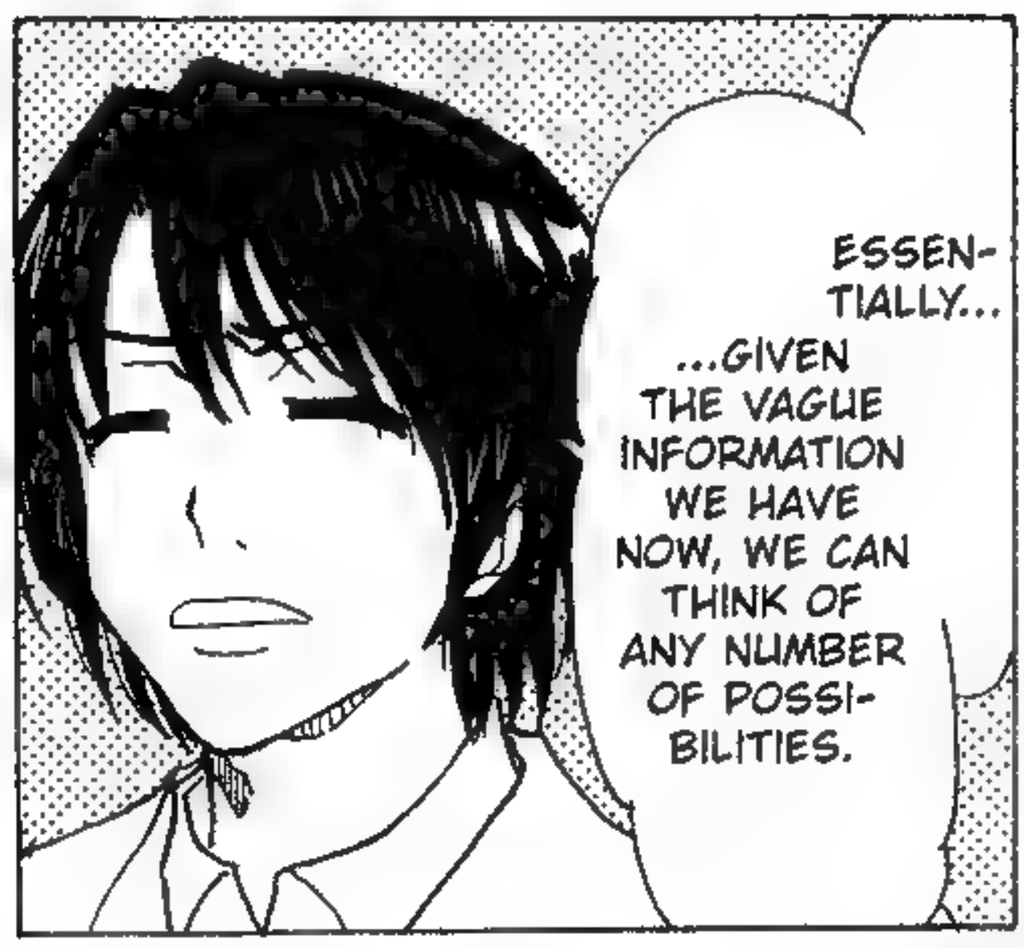
KOI-ZUMI?

SENSE OF SMELL.

WHAT IS IT THAT ANIMALS, AND DOGS IN PARTICULAR, ARE VERY GOOD AT?
SO HERE'S A QUIZ FOR YOU.
THE SITUATION IS THAT ALL THE NEIGHBOR-HOOD DOGS HAVE STARTED AVOIDING A CERTAIN LOCATION.

I CAN'T SAY ANYTHING FOR CERTAIN AT THE MOMENT.

OR WAS BURIED BY SOMEONE.
EXACTLY. THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT SOMEWHERE ALONG THEIR ROUTE, SOMETHING THAT GIVES OFF A SCENT THAT DOGS HATE IS BURIED.



DO YOUR MYSTERY-SOLVING IN THE MYSTERY CLUB, WILLYA?

KUDO THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THOSE IS HAVING DEFINITE INFORMA-TION.

KUDO

KUDO

...AND ADDING A LITTLE BIT OF GUT INSTINCT TO DIRECT OUR ACTIONS.

KUDO

THE ONE AND ONLY WAY TO SEE THROUGH TO THE TRUTH WILL BE A COMBINATION OF GATHERING ALL THE EVIDENCE, USING LOGICAL INFERENCE AND LATERAL THINKING...

KUDO

KUDO

KUDO (BLAH)

YOU LOOK GREAT!

BA (WHAP)

WHAAA?

KUDO

REVEALING THE TRUTH VIA PURE DEDUCTION IS THE EPITOME OF THE MYSTERY GENRE...

PREPA-RATIONS COM-PLETE!

KUDO

YOU'LL BE ABLE TO BANISH ANY GHOST WITH THIS ON!
DO YOU KNOW ANY GOOD EXORCISM CHANTS?
N. NO, I DON'T!
SHARARAN (RUFFLED)
DON'T WE HAVE OTHER THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT?
WHADDYA THINK, KYON? PERFECT, RIGHT?
LIKE WHETHER OR NOT IT'S OKAY TO COSPLAY ON THE WAY HOME FROM SCHOOL
BISHU (FWISH)
WANT TO DRESS UP TOO, YUKI?
WELL, MAYBE NEXT TIME.
.....

I GOT KINDA INTO IT BACK IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.

DON'T WORRY, THERE'S ONE I REMEMBER.

WE'LL FIND SOMETHING WE CAN USE IN A PROPER RITUAL!

ONES WITH SUSPICIOUS SHOPKEEPS.

NEXT TIME WE GO ON PATROL, WE SHOULD GO TO BOOK SHOPS AND PROP STORES!

NOTHING HAPPENED, THOUGH.

OH, RIGHT!

I BOUGHT A MAGIC BOOK AND SAID EVERYTHING JUST LIKE IT TOLD ME TO.

JIRO

JIRO (STARE)

WAAAH!

JUST BE GLAD YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO WEAR THE MAID OUTFIT.

LIKE SOMETHING WHERE IF YOU RUB IT A GENIE POPS OUT!

GATAN (CLUNK)

THERE WEREN'T GOING TO BE ANY GHOSTS SHOWING UP.

GATAN

GATAN

OUR CLIENT WAS OBVIOUSLY A SIMPLE DOG-LOVING CLASSMATE.

BUT TO THINK THE REALITY WOULD BE EVEN WEIRDER THAN THAT...

THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.

HUH.

I GUESS IT WOULD BE RUDE TO SAY I'M A LITTLE SURPRISED.

IT'S REALLY NOT THAT BIG OF A DEAL!

NOT THAT IT MATTERED, BUT HEARING THE WORDS "BIG BROTHER" MADE ME KIND OF NOSTALGIC.

I JUST CAN'T RELAX HERE!

SHE WAS A GENUINE YOUNG LADY OF MEANS.

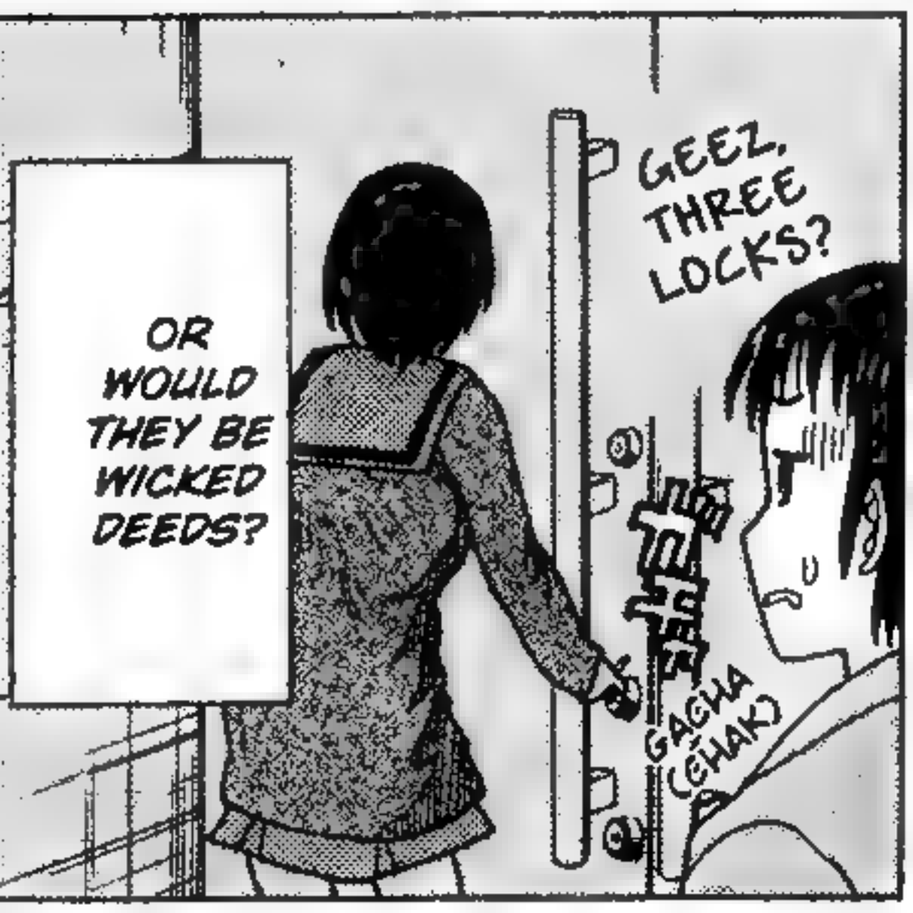
HER FATHER WAS AN EXECUTIVE AT SOME CONSTRUCTION OR ARCHITECTURE FIRM.

MY BIG BROTHER'S AT A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY FOR MEDICINE.

EVEN PEOPLE WHO DIDN'T LIVE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD KNEW IT WAS A FANCY PART OF TOWN.

SUCH LUXURY.
IT'S MAGNI-FICENT!

HERE WE ARE.


OR WOULD THEY BE WICKED DEEDS?
GEEZ, THREE LOCKS?
GACHA (CHAK)

...I WONDERED HOW MANY GOOD DEEDS I WOULD HAVE TO PERFORM TO BE REBORN INTO A PLACE LIKE THIS.
AW, NOT REALLY!
IT DIDN'T HAVE THE SHEER SIZE THAT TSURUYA-SAN'S ESTATE HAS, BUT...
I COULD ONLY CURSE MY OWN LOW BIRTH.

GAAAAN (CLAAANG)
HE... HE'S SO CUTE !!!
ROUSSEAU, SIT!

WAWAN (BARK)

THIS IS ROUSSEAU?

CUTE!!

CUTE!!

HE'S LIKE A TOY!

WHAT KIND OF DOG IS HE?

HE'S A WEST HIGHLAND WHITE TERRIER, I BELIEVE.

OH, FRIENDS OF YOURS?

SO YOU'RE SAYING J.J. HERE SNIFFED SOMETHING MYSTERIOUS OUT, DID HE?

SORRY, WE CAN'T, WE'VE GOT BUSINESS!
BUT OF COURSE HARUHI WAS UNMOVED AND TURNED HER DOWN.
I WAS STUNNED.

WOULD YOU STAY FOR SOME TEA?
WAS THAT SERIOUSLY HER MOTHER?
SHE WAS SO YOUTHFUL AND ATTRACTIVE...

...BUT I SUPPOSE IT WAS BETTER WE WENT OUT TO TAKE IN SPRING'S FINEST.
I SORT OF WANTED TO KNOW WHAT KIND OF TEA WOULD'VE BEEN SERVED...

OKAY, J.J., LET'S GO!

TATA (DASH)

CAN'T YOU RUN A LITTLE FASTER?

OH, SUZUMIYA-SAN, THIS WAY!

I'LL JUST LEAVE THAT TO YOU.

I WAS THINKING OF INVESTIGATING PLACES THAT ARE DIFFICULT FOR DOGS TO APPROACH.

I WAS JUST THINKING THAT!

THIS KIND OF MAKES ME WANT A DOG OF MY OWN.

IT REALLY FELT LIKE WE WERE ON A WALK.

TO GO ON A WALK YOU GOTTA GET OUT AND WALK

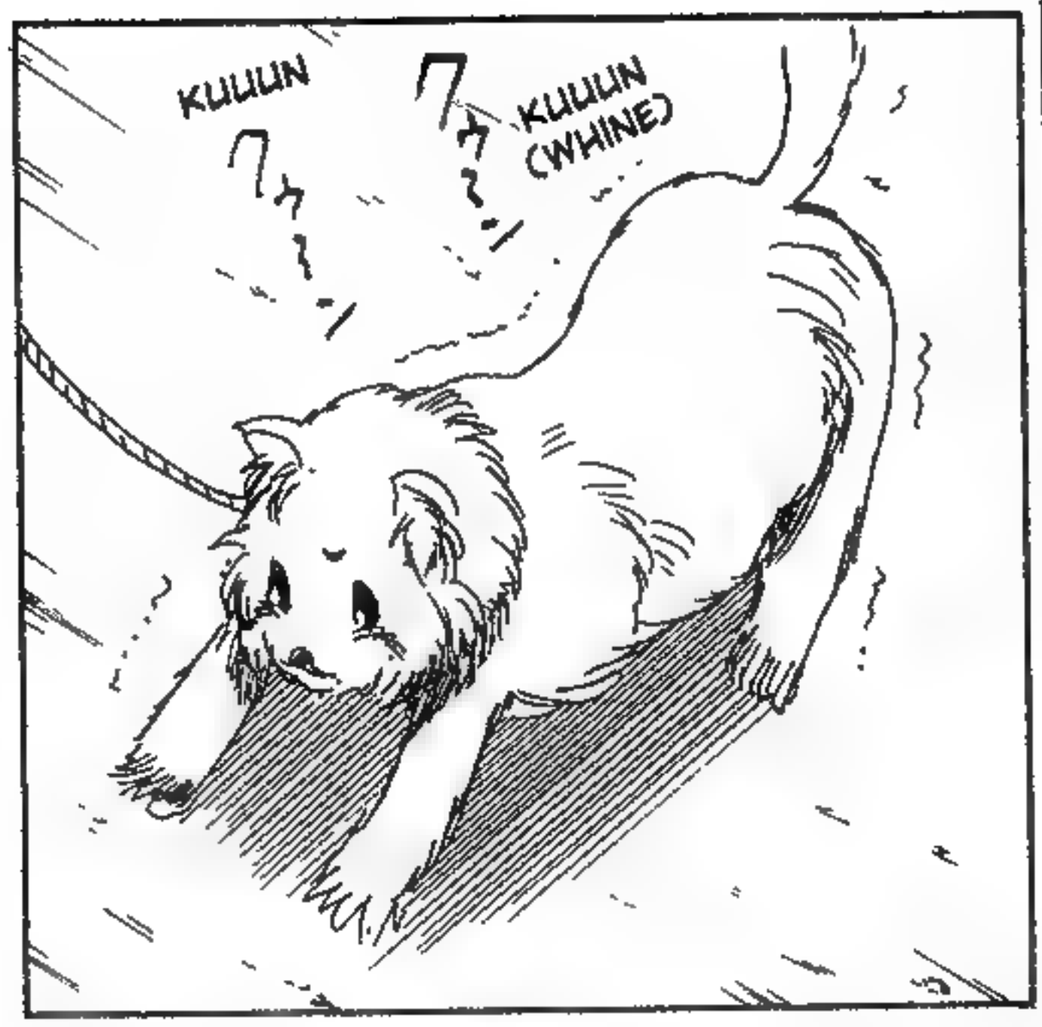
WITH THE CHERRY TREES ...

WE WERE BEARING EAST.

IF WE KEPT HEADING THIS WAY, WE'D ENCOUNTER THE RIVER.

AH HA!

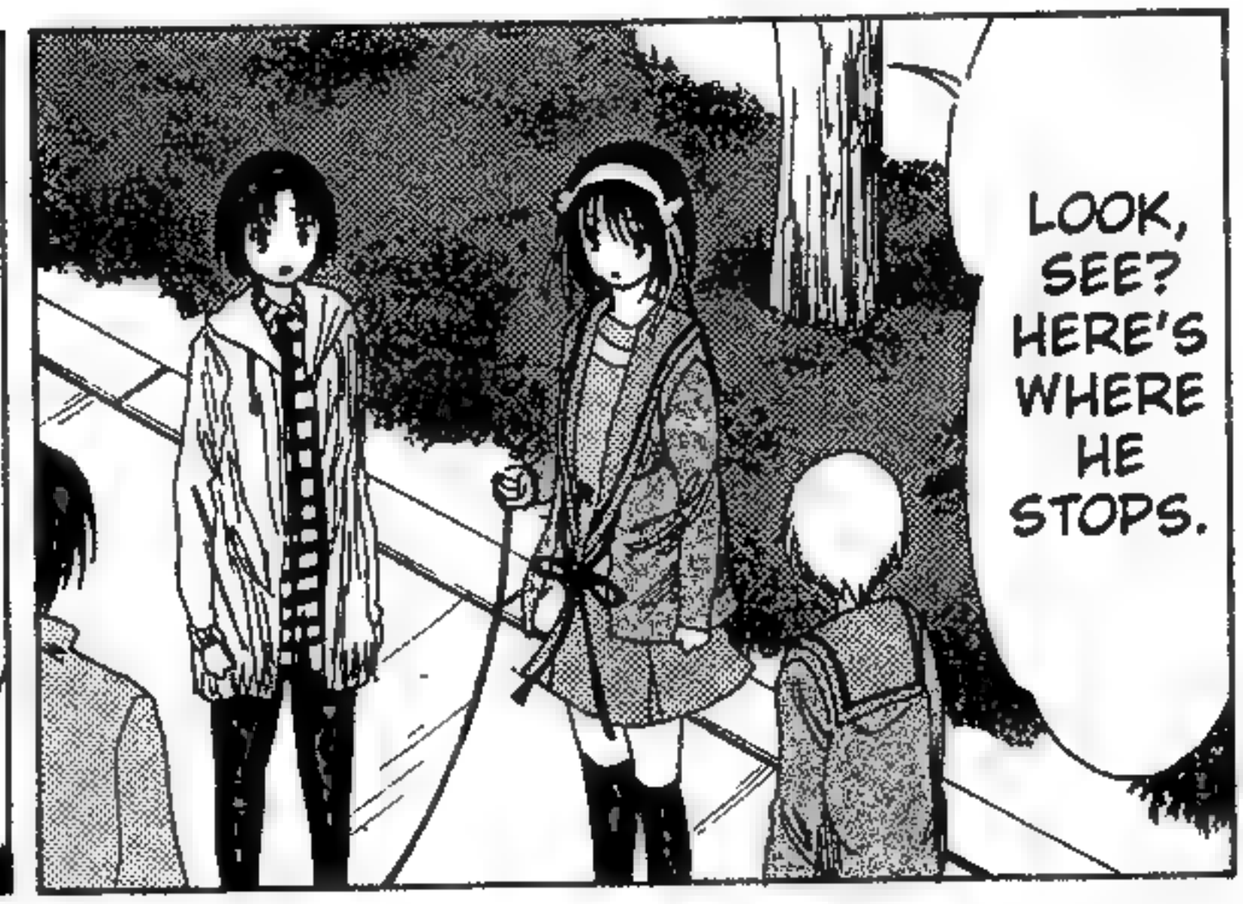
SEEMS LIKE SHE'S FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT THE GHOST BUSINESS.

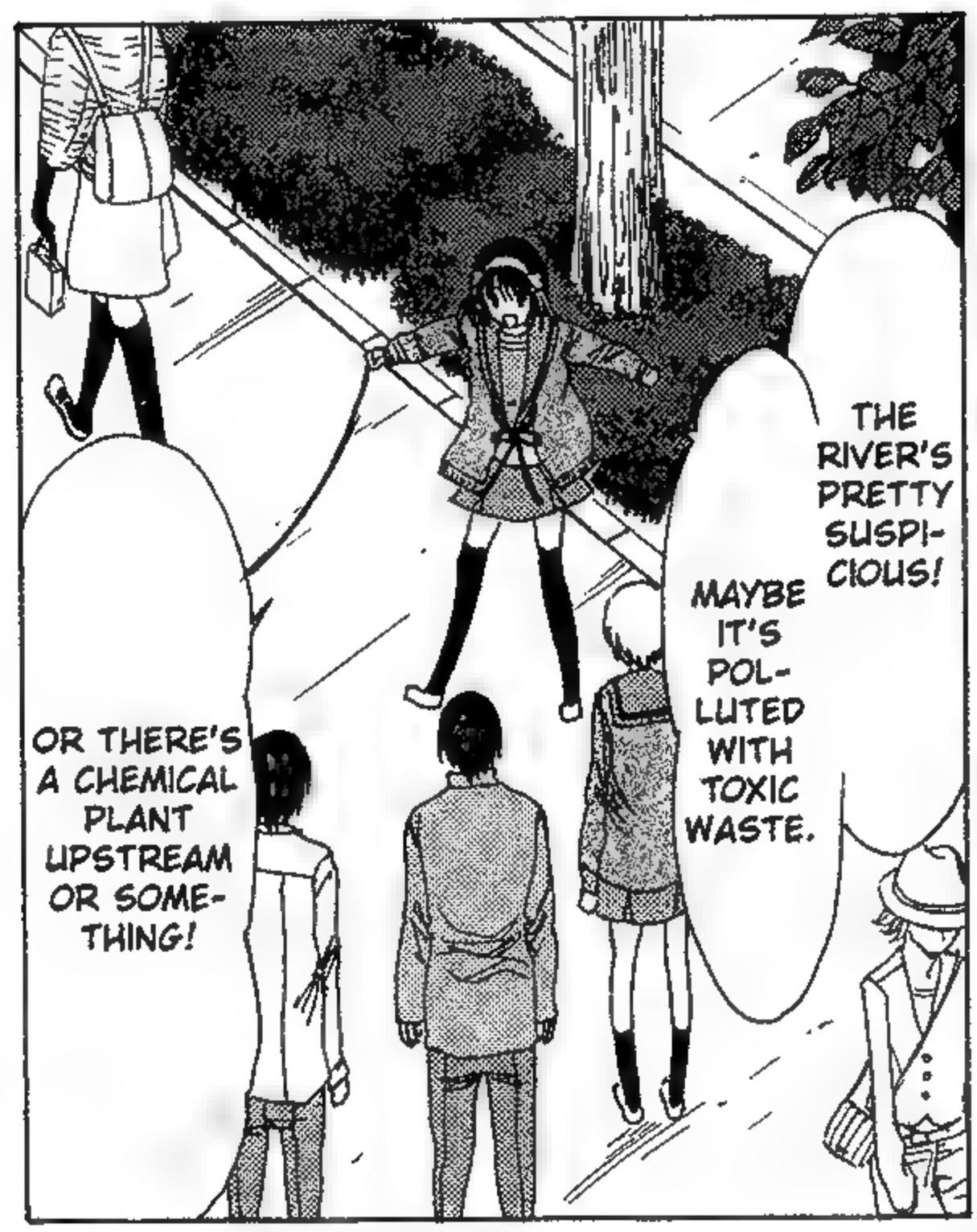

KUUUN
KUUUN (WHINE)

?

AH...

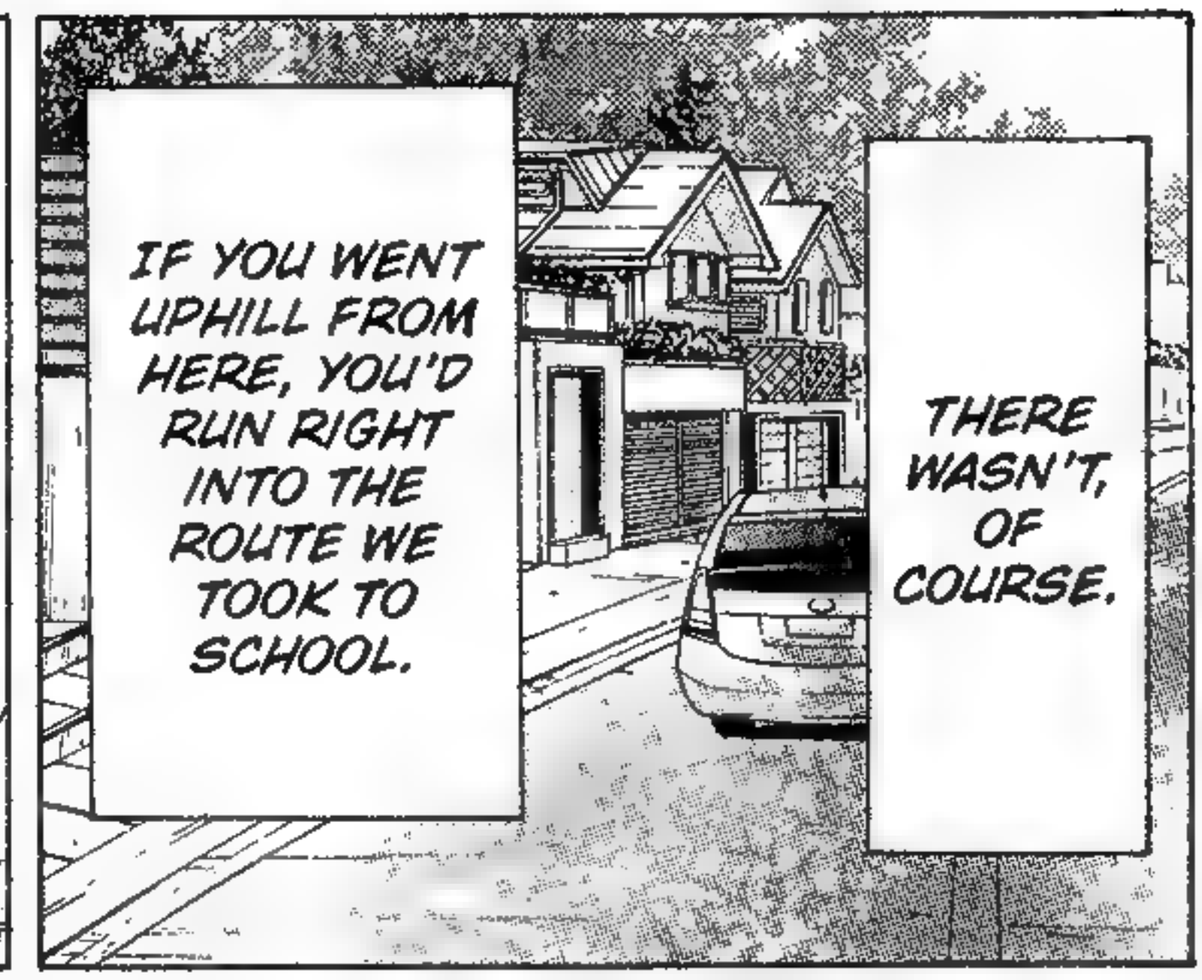
THERE'S A LOT OF GREEN. I GUESS SINCE IT'S CLOSE TO THE RIVER.
IT'S A RESI-DENTIAL AREA ...
I DON'T SEE ANYTHING PARTIC-ULARLY SUSPI-CIOUS, THOUGH ...

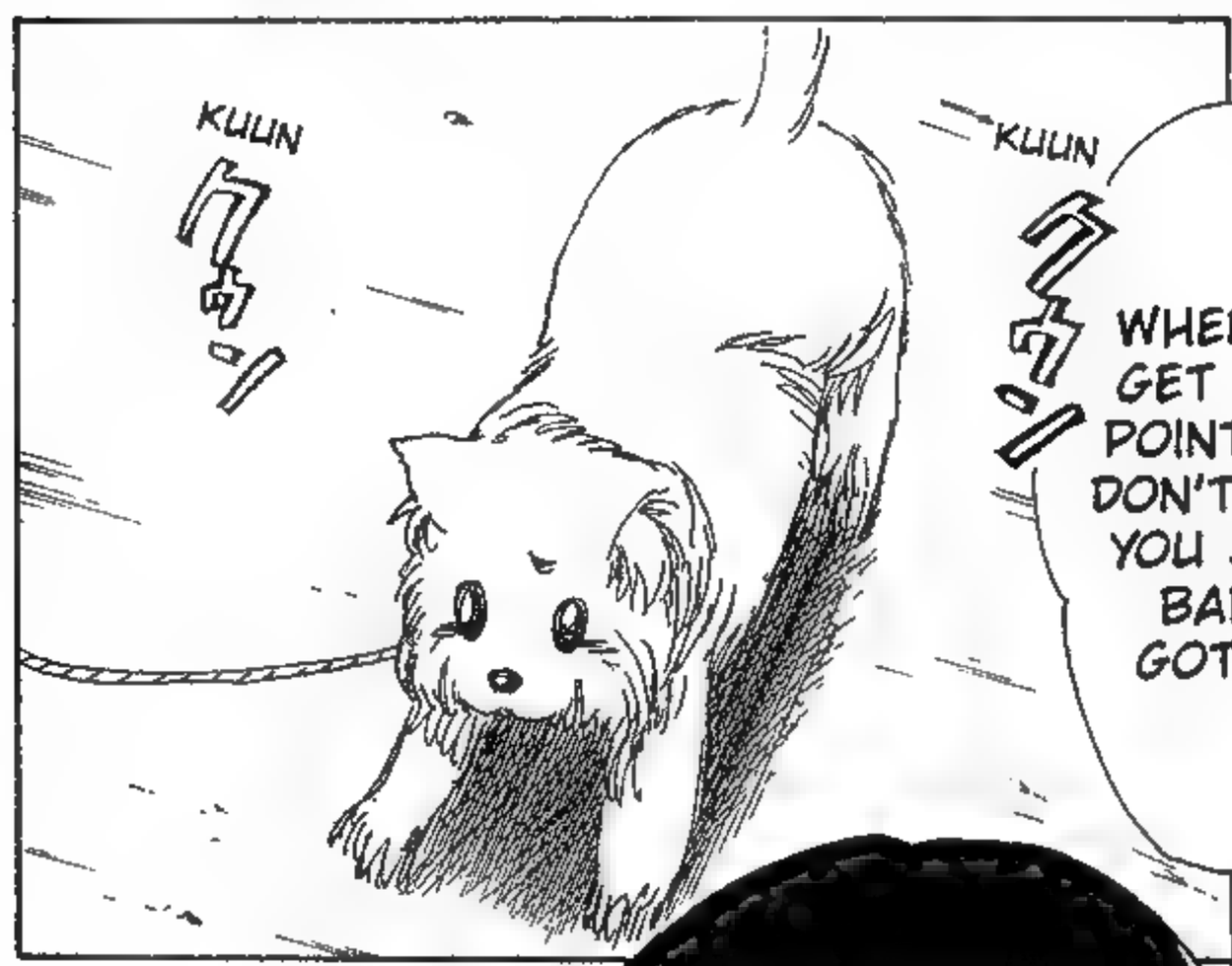

LOOK, SEE? HERE'S WHERE HE STOPS.


THE RIVER'S PRETTY SUSPI-CIOUS!
MAYBE IT'S POL-LUTED WITH TOXIC WASTE.
OR THERE'S A CHEMICAL PLANT UPSTREAM OR SOME-THING!

UP UNTIL LAST WEEK, I'D CONTINUE STRAIGHT ON AHEAD HERE, ALONG THE RIVER.
BUT A WEEK AGO ROUSSEAU STARTED REFUSING TO GO NEAR THE RIVER.

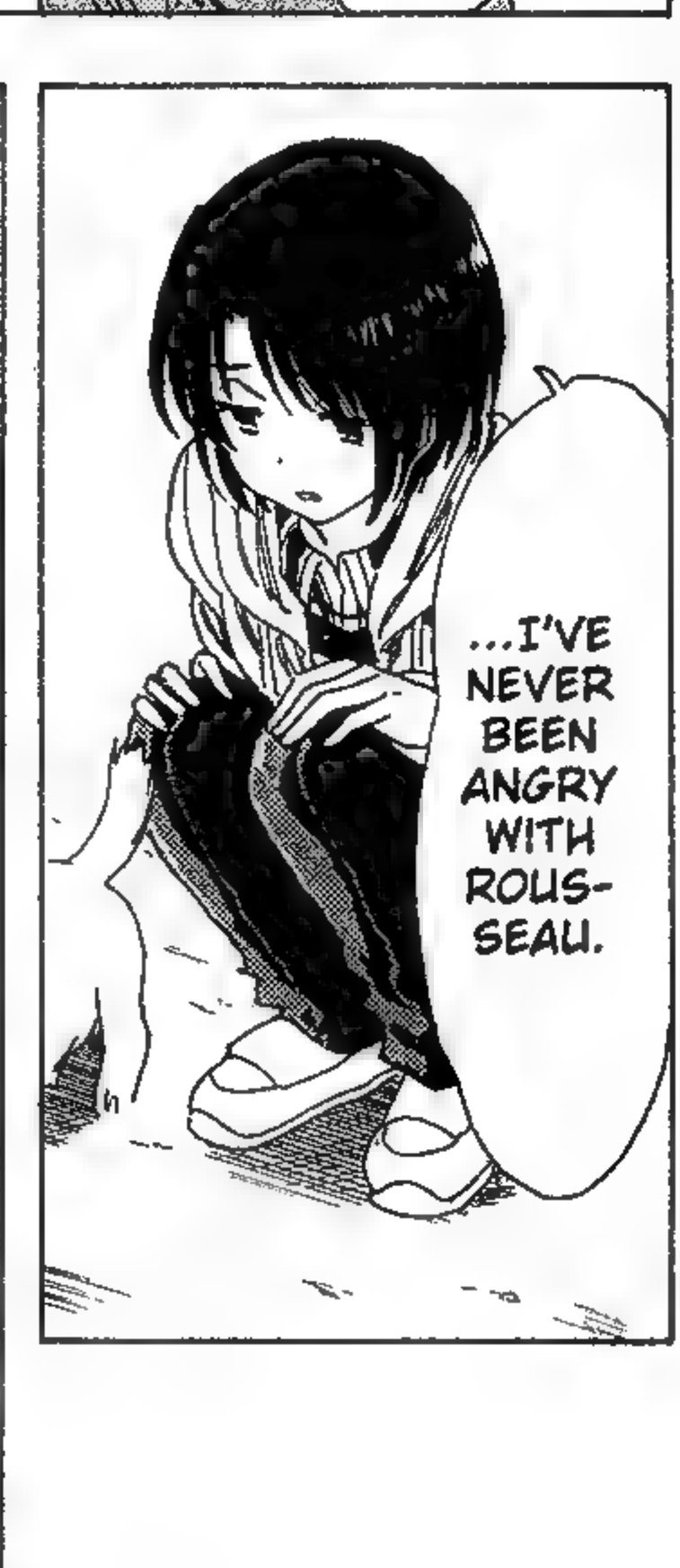
HIGUCHI-SAN AND MINAMI-SAN SAID THEIR DOGS ARE THE SAME WAY.
HE DOESN'T MIND HEADING FARTHER UP OR DOWNSTREAM.


IF YOU WENT UPHILL FROM HERE, YOU'D RUN RIGHT INTO THE ROUTE WE TOOK TO SCHOOL.
THERE WASN'T, OF COURSE.


KUUN
KUUN
WHEN WE GET TO A POINT YOU DON'T LIKE, YOU JUST BARK, GOT IT?

KUI (TUG)
KUI
OKAY, J.J.
YOU'RE GONNA GUIDE US AROUND THIS AREA.

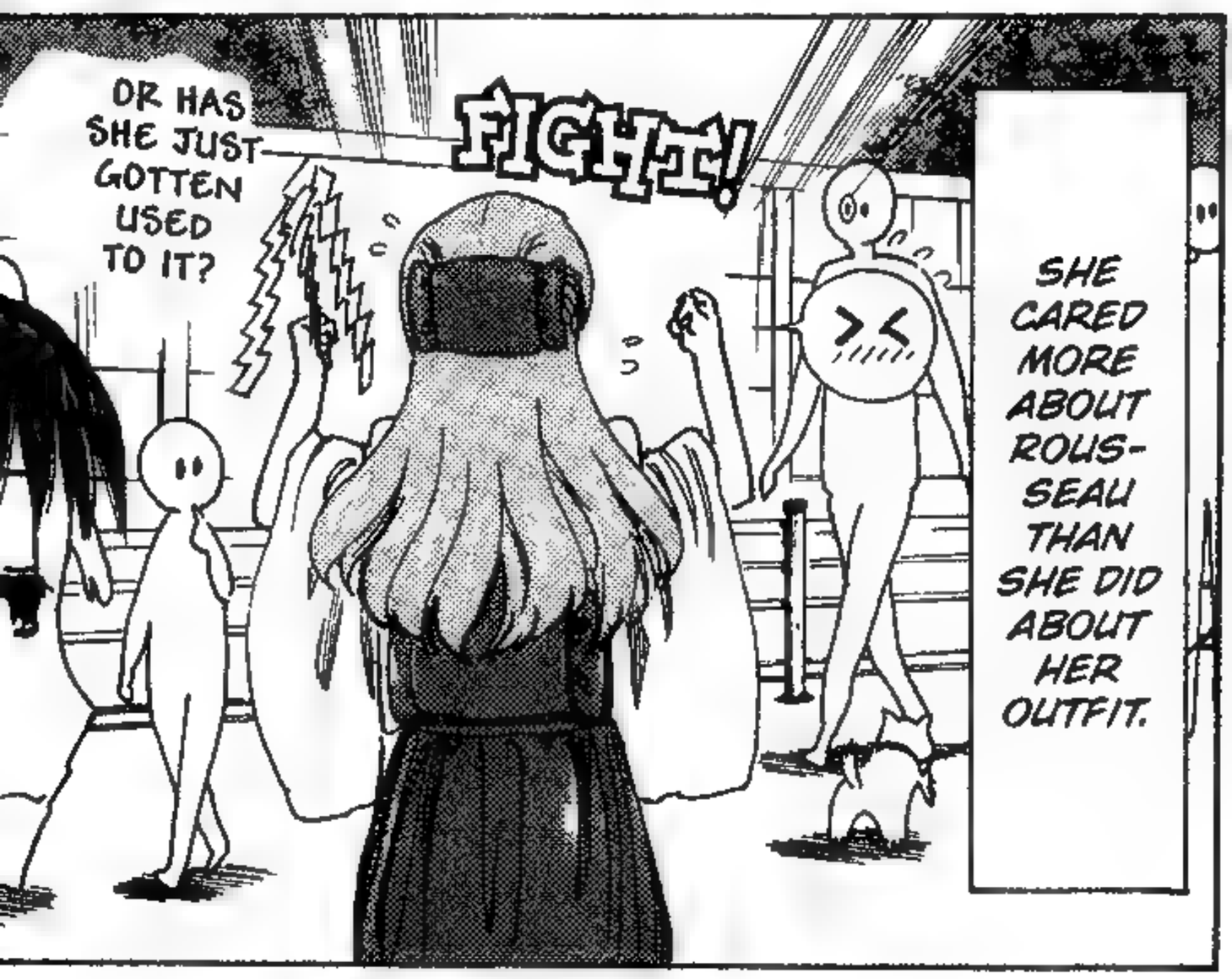
IF THAT HAPPENED TO ME, I'D JUST DIE MYSELF.
THAT'S WHY.
DID YOU KNOW THAT THERE ARE DOGS WHO DIE FROM THE SHOCK OF THEIR OWNERS BEING ANGRY AT THEM?
...


...I'VE NEVER BEEN ANGRY WITH ROUSSEAU.

WE'VE NO INTENTION OF FORCING HIM.
EVEN FOR THE SPOILED DAUGHTER OF A RICH FAMILY...
YES!
YES!
I COULDN'T BELIEVE HOW DOG-CRAZY SHE WAS.
IT SHOULD PROBABLY BE CONSIDERED AN AREA RATHER THAN A POINT.
THE PLACE YOU SAY DOGS ARE AVOIDING ...
...BY EXTENSION, IS AHEAD OF US.
WE ARE HERE.
...?
IN ANY CASE, WE SHOULD HEAD BACK FOR NOW.
WE'LL TAKE ROUSSEAU ALONG A DIFFERENT ROUTE.

WE'LL GO SOUTH AGAIN HERE.
THIS SHOULD DO.

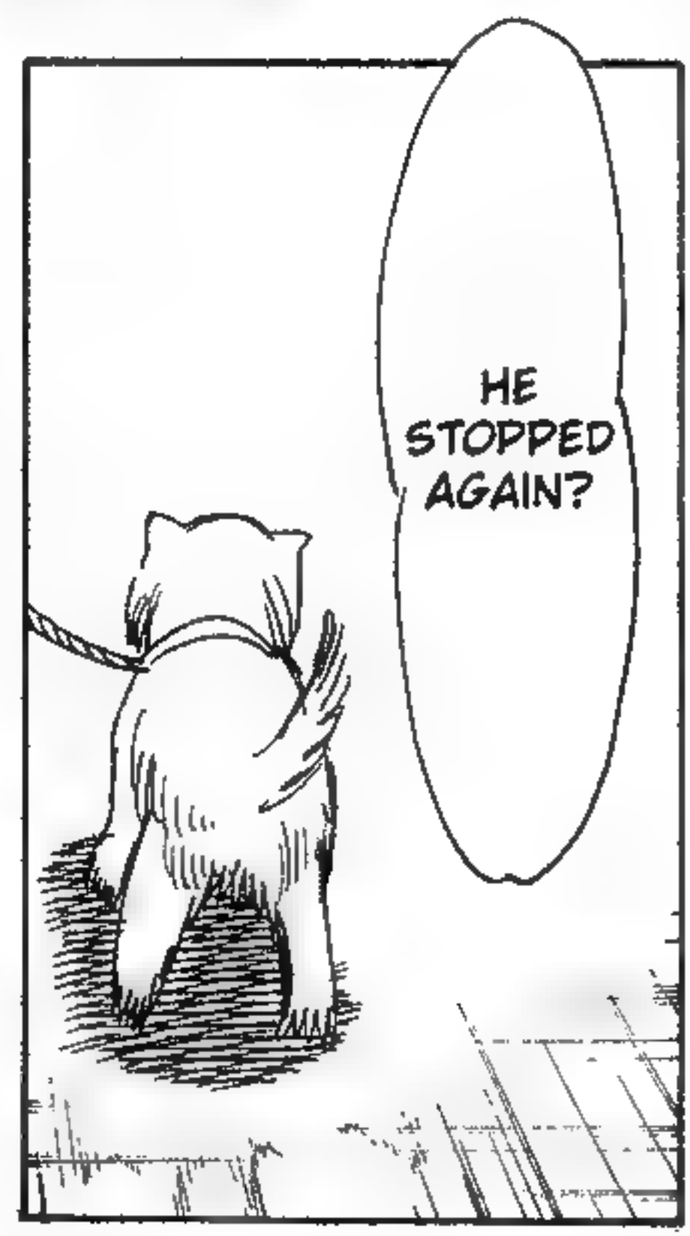
SO WE ENDED UP WITH-DRAWING.

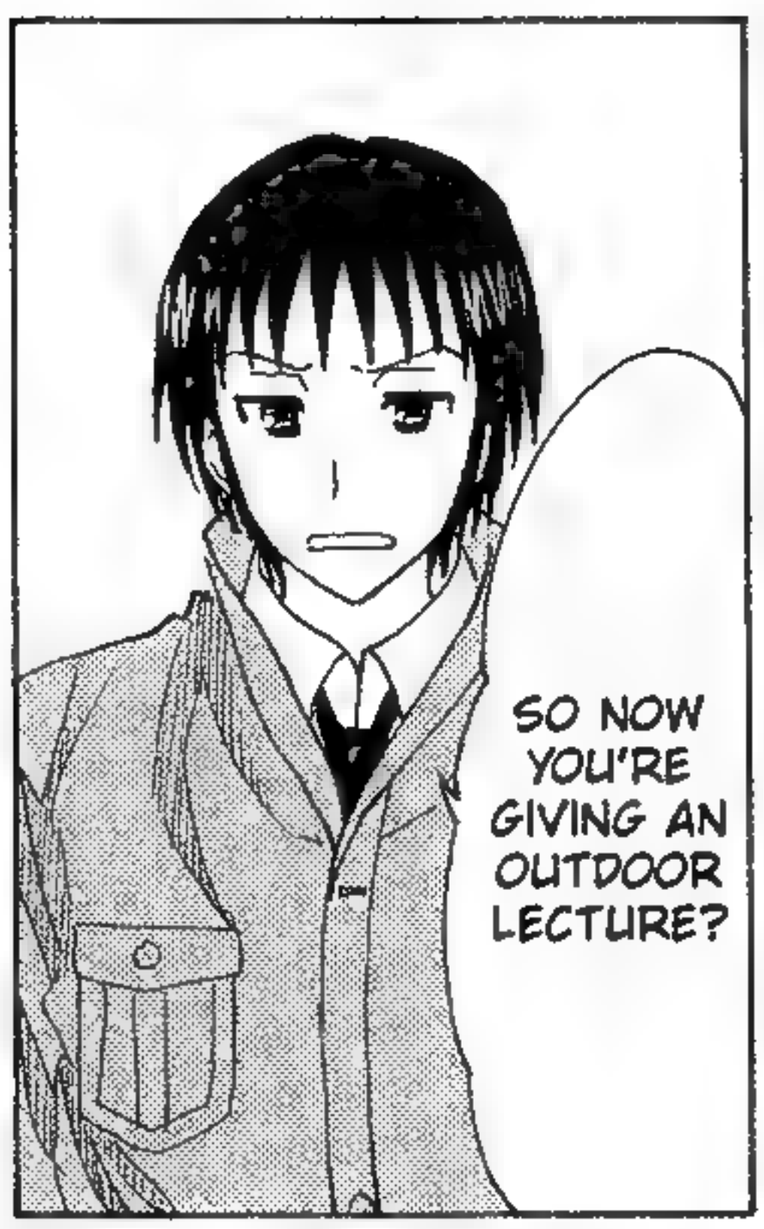

OR HAS SHE JUST GOTTEN USED TO IT?
FIGHT!
SHE CARED MORE ABOUT ROUS-SEAU THAN SHE DID ABOUT HER OUTFIT.

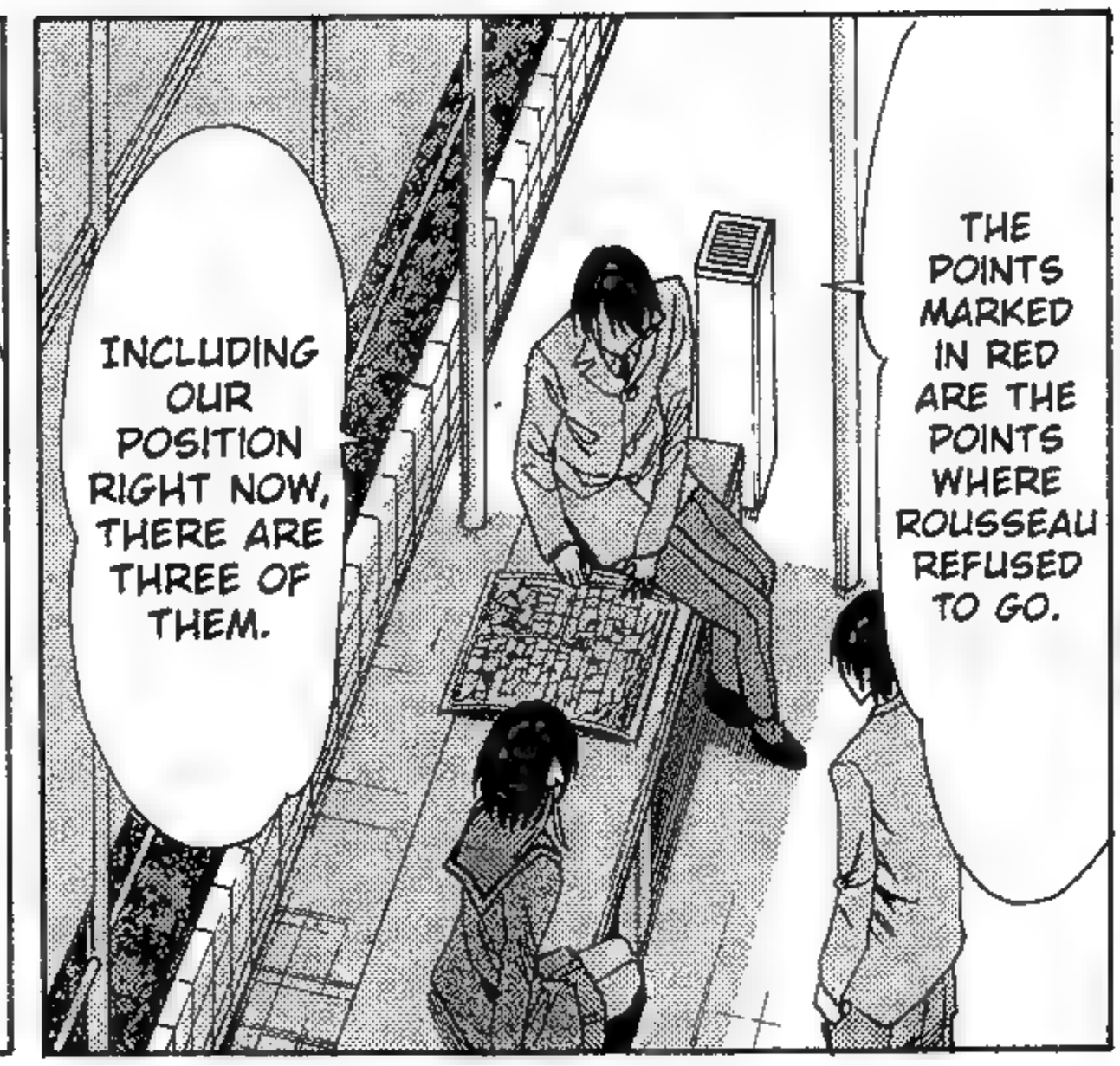
WON'T THE DOG GET TIRED?
IT WAS RARE TO SEE KOIZUMI TAKING THE LEAD.

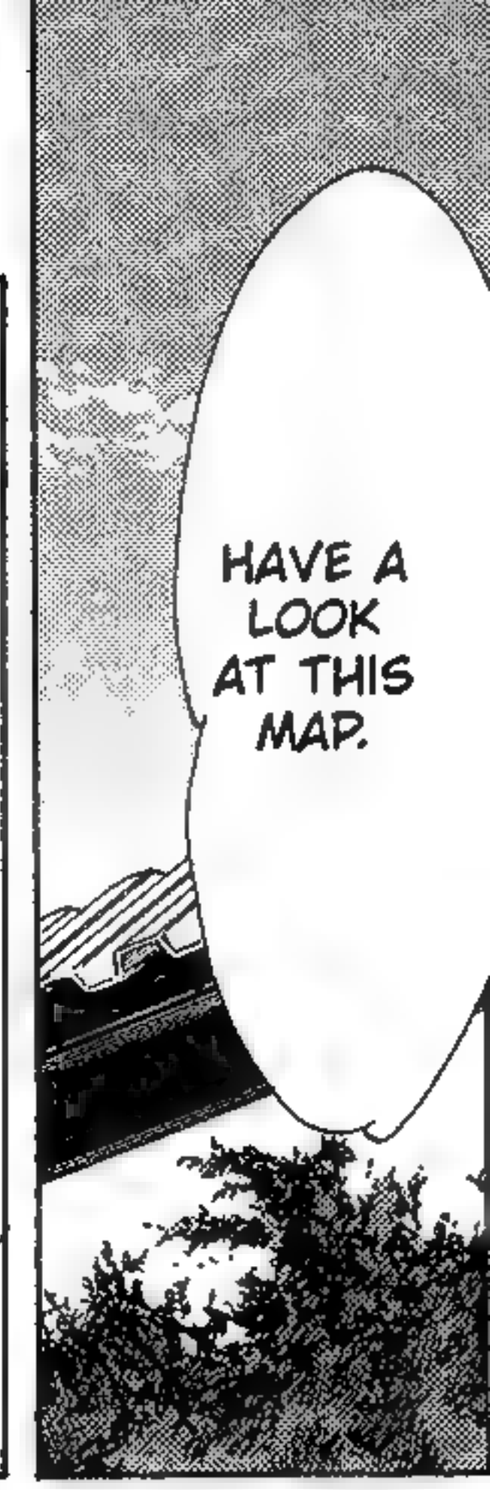
クゥゥ
KUUUN (WHIIINE)

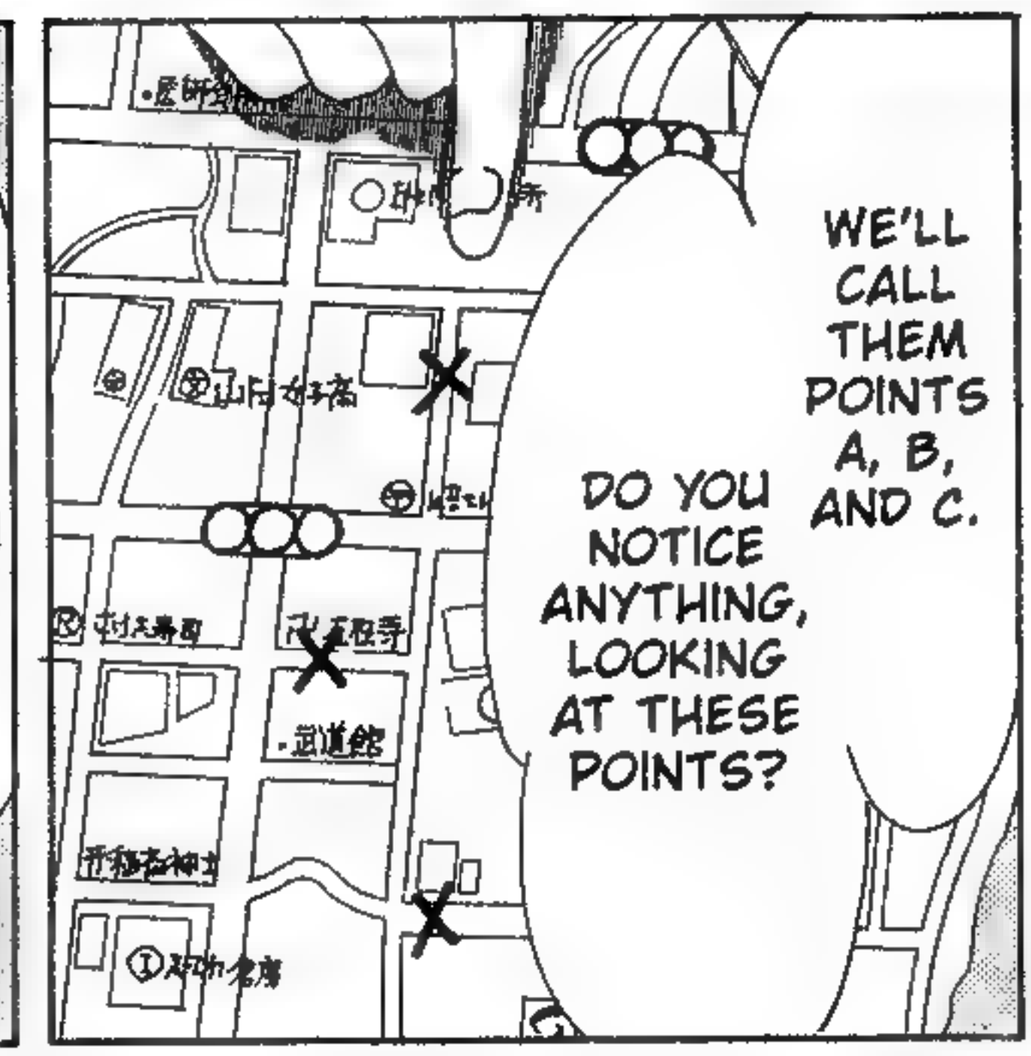
I THINK I'M STARTING TO UNDER-STAND.
ONE MORE DATA POINT SHOULD DO IT.


HE STOPPED AGAIN?

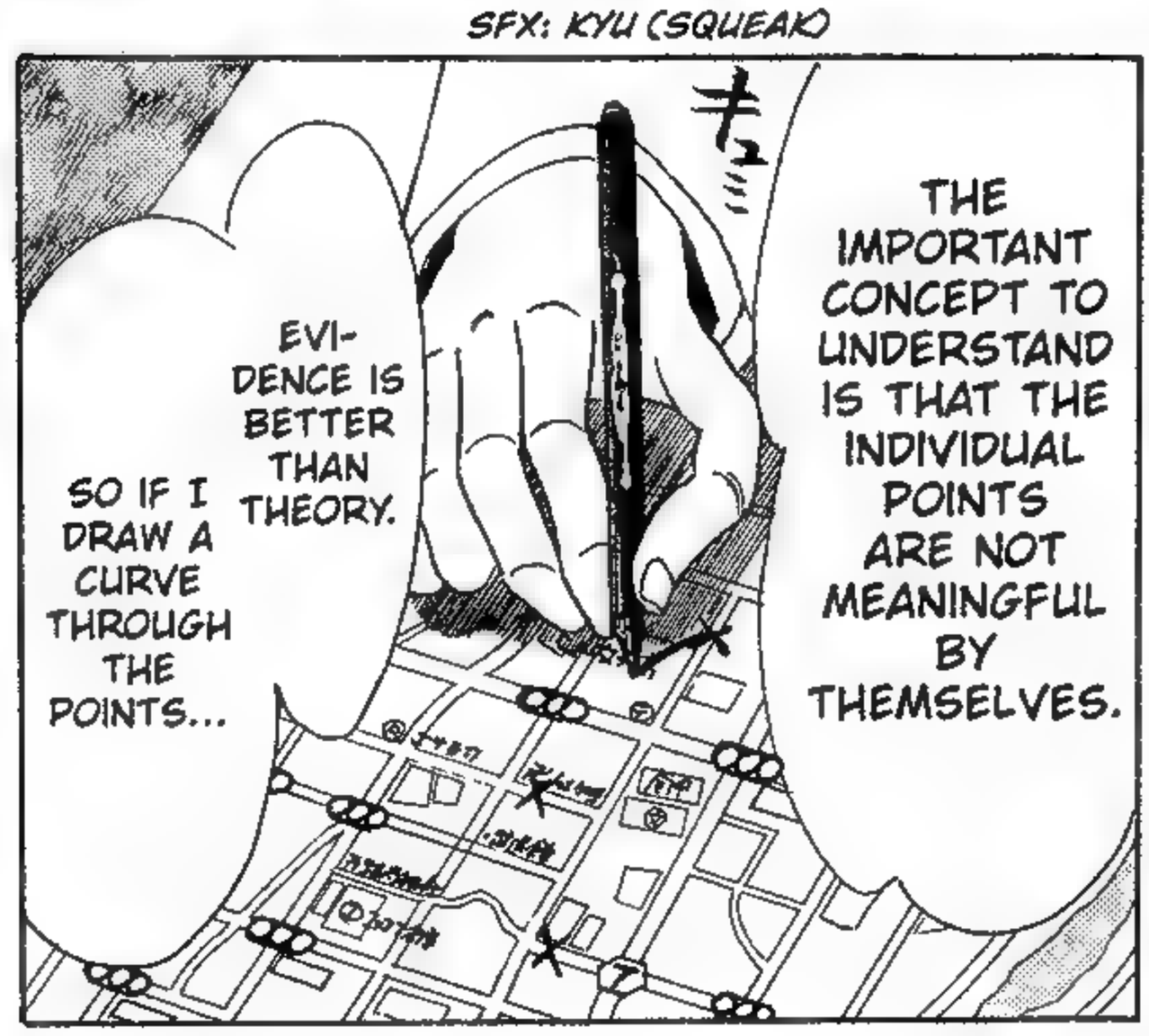






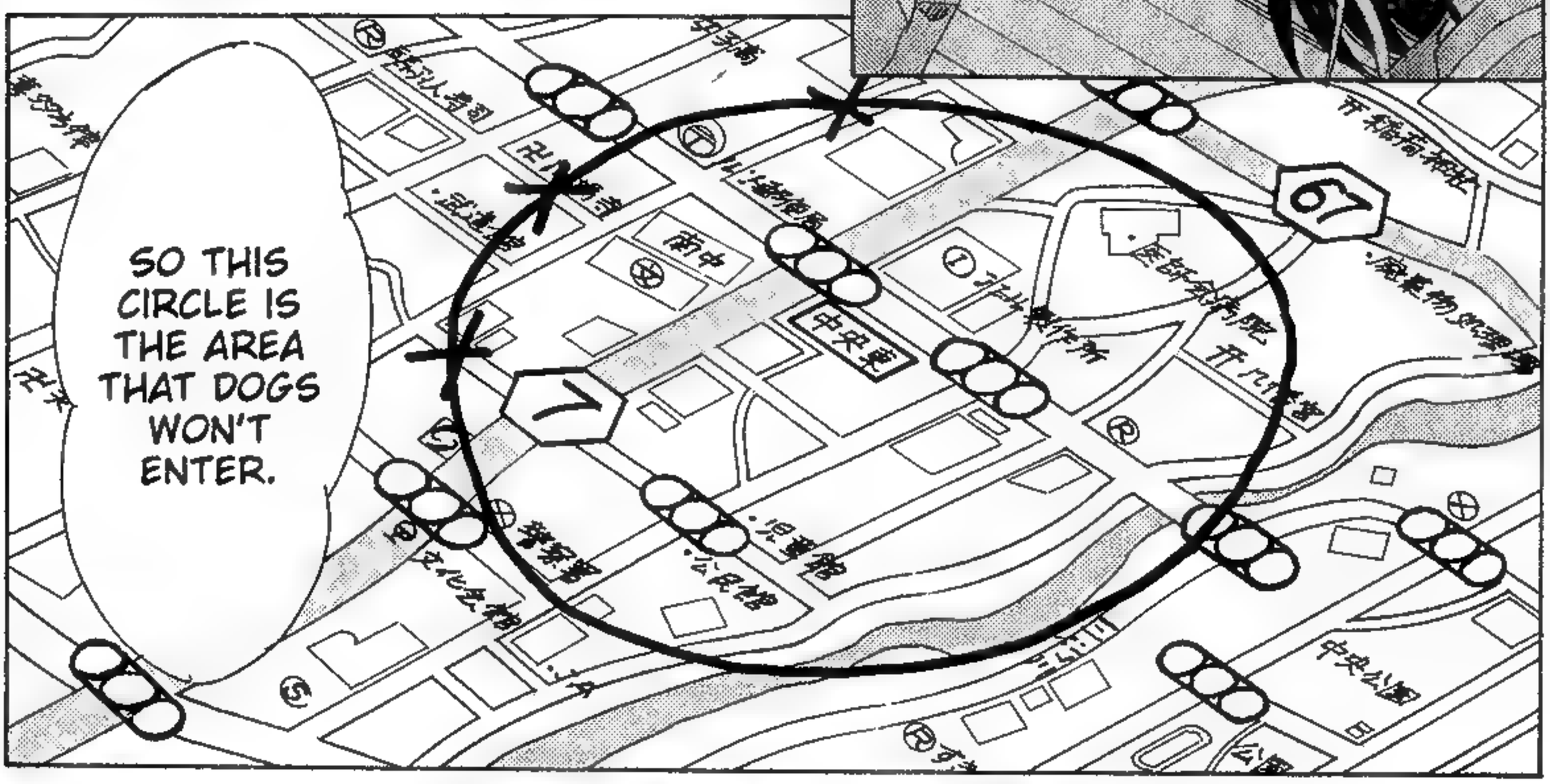


SFX: KYU (SQUEAK)



OH, I SEE.
SO THAT'S HOW IT IS!

KYU
KYU
KYUU


SO THIS CIRCLE IS THE AREA THAT DOGS WON'T ENTER.
67
7

I AM MERELY HYPOTHESIZING THAT THE AREA IS CIRCULAR.
WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHETHER THE CAUSE IS A SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENON...
... OR SOME KIND OF HARMFUL MAN-MADE SUBSTANCE, BUT...

OUR GOAL SHOULD BE THE CENTER OF THE CIRCLE!

...OR MAYBE BECAUSE OF THAT.

WE CAN'T STOP EVEN THOUGH HER EXCELLENCY THE BRIGADE CHIEF IS HERE...

WANDERING SHADOW I : END

BAN (BAM)
SO, LET'S HEAD TO THE CENTER!
I GOT THE FEELING THAT EVERY TIME SOMETHING MYSTERIOUS HAPPENED, I ALWAYS SEEMED TO FIND MYSELF IN FAMILIAR PLACES.
IT FELT LIKE I WAS BEING CALLED THERE.
PI (JAB)
YOU JUST RELAX AND IMAGINE YOU'RE ON A PLEASURE CRUISE.
WE'LL EXORCISE YOUR GHOST!
SHE'S ACTUALLY RUNNING.
DAA (DASH)
NOW, OFF WE GO!

MAYBE AROUND HERE?

THIS SHOULD BE ROUGHLY THE LOCATION.

ONLY THE FIVE FULL MEMBERS OF THE SOS BRIGADE HAD COME THIS FAR.

PAPA (FWISH)

O. OKAY -

OKAY, MIKURU-CHAN! YOU'RE ON!

I JUST CAN'T!

SAKANAKA HAD REFUSED TO BRING ROUSSEAU ALONG.

WHICH WASN'T PARTICU-LARLY A PROBLEM.

PA

PA (FWAP)

SHO. SHOUKEN GOUN...

KAI-KUU ...

DORO

DORO

DORO

DORO

DORO (CHANT)

DORO

K. KANJIZAIBO... SATSUGYO...? GYOUJIN HANNYAA... HARAMII TAJII...

YOU'RE LOOK-ING GOOD!

SIGN: HANNYA SHINKYOU KANJIZAI

DO.DOICHI SAIKU YAKUSHA-RISHII...

FUII-SHIKI ...?

SHIKIFUIII KUUKUU...

NOT WITHIN MY CAPABILITIES TO DETECT.

NOTHING.

IS THAT TRUE?

THERE IS NOTHING.

WAIT JUST A SECOND!

SIGN: HANNYA SHINKYOU

JUST A COSPLAY-DISPLAY EVENT?

SO WHAT KIND OF FARCE WAS ALL THIS?

AH, HMM, THIS MIGHT TAKE A BIT OF TIME TO EXPLAIN ...

WHY CAN THAT DOG RUN AROUND HERE LIKE NORMAL?

HUH?

YOU THERE! I'VE GOT A QUESTION!

THAT DOG...

I COULDN'T FIGURE OUT WHY.

...THIS LITTLE GUY STARTED WANTING TO AVOID OUR USUAL COURSE.

WELL, ABOUT A WEEK AGO...

OH, THAT.

THEN THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY— OR WAS IT THREE DAYS AGO?—

HE STARTED RUNNING ON THIS COURSE.

HA HA HA (PANT)

...I TRIED TO BRING HIM HERE TO SEE IF IT WORKS.

BUT THIS IS THE BEST ROAD TO WALK HIM ON, SO...

SOUNDS LIKE WHAT KOIZUMI WAS THINKING.

THERE WAS PROB-ABLY A BEAR AROUND OR SOME-THING.

AND ITS SCENT WAS LINGER-ING.

I'LL BET IF YOUR FRIEND FORCED HER DOG A LITTLE BIT, HE'D BE BACK TO HIS OLD SELF.

CHIRA (GLANCE)

HNNGH...

LEAVING US FIVE MORONS BEHIND?

HEY, NO PROBLEM.

SEEYA!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

YOU REALLY HELPED US OUT!

GAAAN (GRAR)

I'D BEEN REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO THEM!

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE GHOSTS?

DON (LOOM)

YOU SEEM WEIRDLY HAPPY.

IT'S KINDA BUGGING ME.

C'MON! THAT'S NOT FAIR.

WHEW...

IT MEANS THERE WEREN'T ANY GHOSTS TO BEGIN WITH.

...AND THE OTHER NEIGHBOR-HOOD DOGS WON'T APPROACH IS PROBABLY DUE TO THEIR MEMORIES OF WHATEVER IT WAS.

THE FACT THAT ROUS-SEAU ...

BUT NOW THERE IS NOT.

WE KNOW THAT THERE WAS DEFINITELY SOMETHING HAPPENING UNTIL THAT POINT.

ACCORDING TO THE FELLOW WE JUST TALKED TO, IT WAS THREE DAYS AGO THAT HE SOLVED THE PROBLEM.

I FELT BETTER SEEING NAGATO REMAIN-ING SILENT.

IF SHE SAID THERE WASN'T ANYTHING HERE, THEN THERE DEFINITELY WASN'T ANYTHING HERE.

MAYBE THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF DOGS?

LIKE ONES WHO REMEMBER UNUSUAL CHANGES AND ONES WHO DON'T....

CHIRA (GLANCE)

YOU COULD OPEN A SHOP WITH THESE!

WHOA! THESE ARE DELI-CIOUS!

SFX: PAAAAA (BEAM)

C'MON, SHOW A LITTLE RESTRAINT.

PLEASE, HAVE AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.

PAKU

PAKU

PAKU (CHOMP)

THEY REALLY ARE DELI-CIOUS!

FU FU FU...

YOU'RE THE ONE THINKING THAT!

YOU BETTER NOT BE THINKING OF HIDING ANY IN SOME TUPPER-WARE TO TAKE HOME.

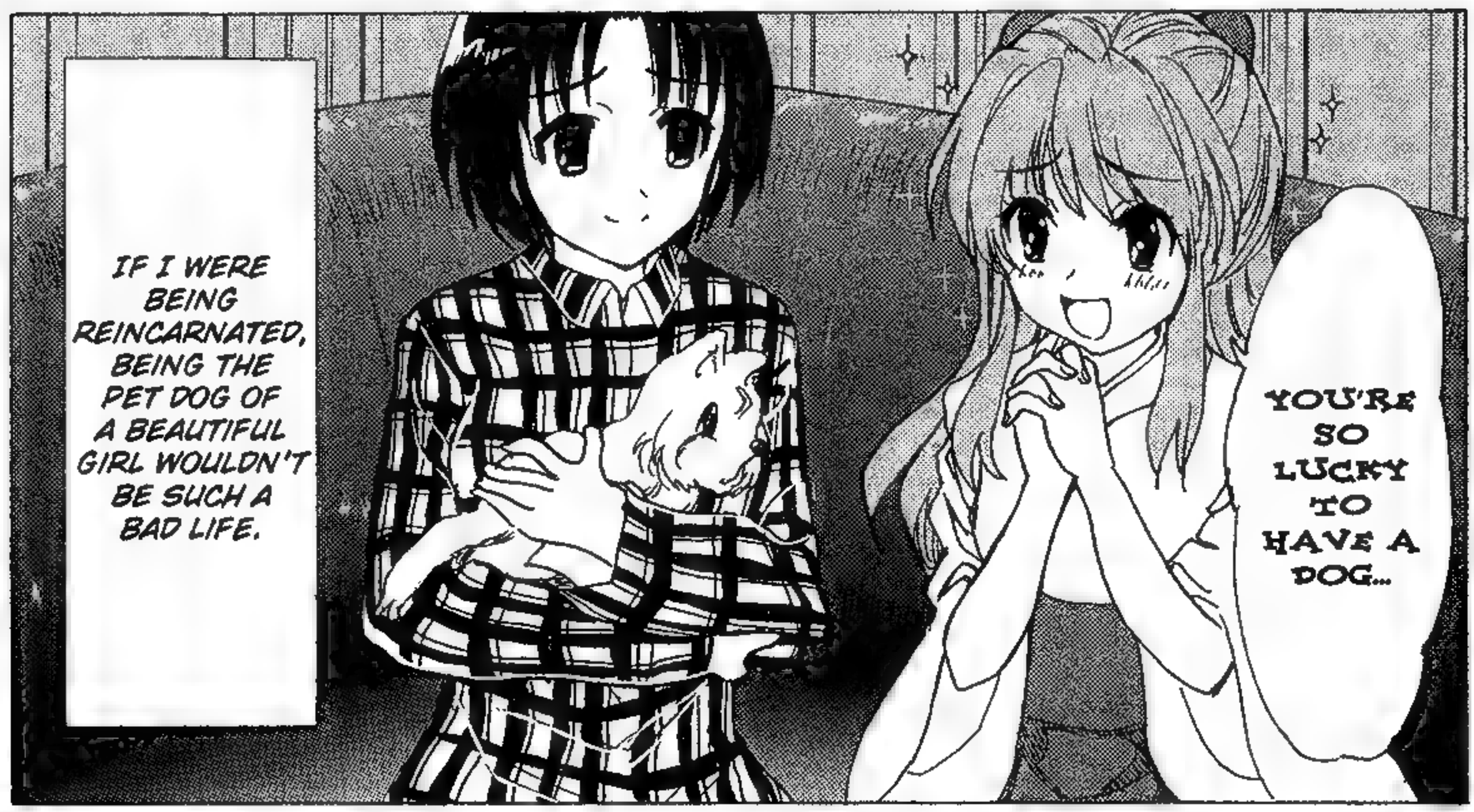
THE LIVING ROOM'S FURNISHINGS WERE CHIC, HIGH-CLASS, AND IN GREAT CONDITION.

SO WE RETURNED TO THE SAKANAKA HOUSE AT THE END OF THE DAY TO REPORT.

I DON'T THINK I'LL MAKE HIM WALK THAT PATH FOR A WHILE.
POOR LITTLE GUY.
BUT SEEING HOW SCARED ROUSSEAU GOT EARLIER...

KUUN (WHINE)
I UNDER-STAND THAT IT SEEMS SAFE NOW.

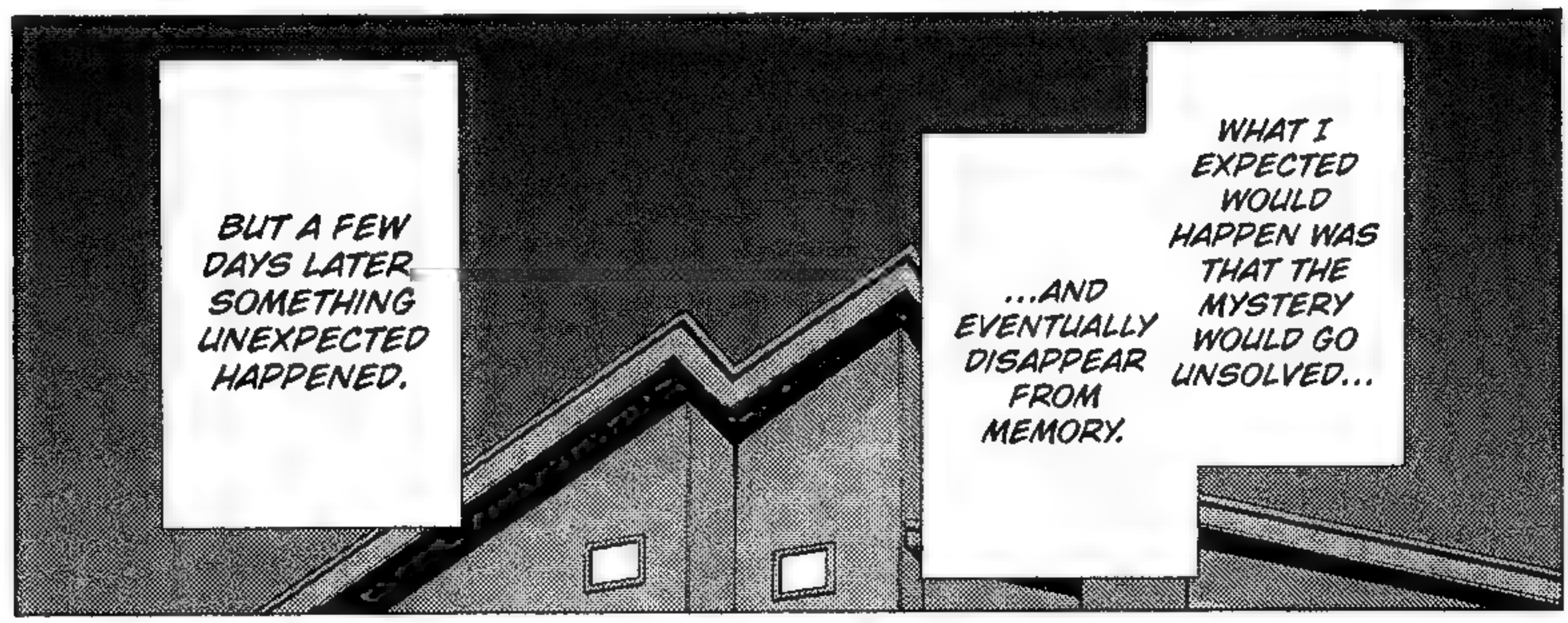
ROUSSEAU WAS LUCKY TO HAVE SUCH A CONSIDERATE CARETAKER.
ALTHOUGH IT SEEMED TO ME SHE SPOILED HIM A LITTLE TOO MUCH.
WE'LL LEAVE THAT TO YOUR DISCRE-TION AS HIS OWNER.


IF I WERE BEING REINCARNATED, BEING THE PET DOG OF A BEAUTIFUL GIRL WOULDN'T BE SUCH A BAD LIFE.
YOU'RE SO LUCKY TO HAVE A DOG...

IN THE END, IT SEEMED LIKE WE'D JUST HAD A NORMAL DAY GOING OVER TO OUR CLASS-MATE'S HOUSE TO PLAY.
AND NATU-RALLY, WE KEPT EATING CREAM PUFFS ALL THE WHILE.

AFTER THAT, SAKANAKA CHATTED WITH US ABOUT OTHER DOG-RELATED ANEC-DOTES.

WHICH WAS JUST FINE WITH ME, PERSONALLY.


BUT A FEW DAYS LATER SOMETHING UNEXPECTED HAPPENED.
...AND EVENTUALLY DISAPPEAR FROM MEMORY.
WHAT I EXPECTED WOULD HAPPEN WAS THAT THE MYSTERY WOULD GO UNSOLVED...

HEY, KYON, DID YOU NOTICE?

SAKANAKA WASN'T AT SCHOOL TODAY!

IT WAS FRIDAY.

THE ONLY THING LEFT TO DO WAS WAIT FOR THE END OF THE TERM TO COME.

URRGH...
AND SHE'S WORRIED SICK, SO...
BUT THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM.
HE'S BEEN TAKEN TO AN ANIMAL HOSPITAL.
BA'AN (WHAM)
I KNEW IT!
IT'S BECAUSE OF ROUSSEAU!
HANG ON...
JUST CALM DOWN ...
...BUT SINCE ROUSSEAU ISN'T EATING EITHER, IT JUST MAKES HER FEEL WORSE...
UR...
...RGH!
SHE'S SO WORRIED SHE CAN'T EAT...
I TALKED TO HER ON THE PHONE, AND SHE SOUNDED LIKE SHE WAS ABOUT TO CRY.
I WAS SO WORRIED I FINALLY CALLED HER...
...I KNEW THERE WASN'T ANY TIME TO WASTE ON CLEANING DUTY!
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM!?
J. J.'S SO SICK...
... J. J.'S SO SICK HE CAN'T EVEN DRINK ANY WATER!

THAT MUST BE WHAT'S CAUSING J.J.'S ILLNESS!

I KNEW THERE WAS SOMETHING IN THAT AREA.

SINCE WHEN HAD HARUHI BEEN GOOD ENOUGH FRIENDS WITH SAKANAKA TO TRADE PHONE NUMBERS?

THAT WAS THE SECOND SURPRISE OF THE DAY.

HERE, HAVE SOME TEA.
TRY TO KEEP THE STORY STRAIGHT, WILLYA?
HIGUCHI-SAN, WHO HAS A BUNCH OF DOGS!

GEEZ, KYON, YOU'RE SO STU-PID!
FUGAA (FWEE)
SAKANAKA TOLD US ABOUT HER BEFORE!!

THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT THE CAUSE IS.
UGH, YOU'VE GOT NO MEMORY AT ALL. TRY TO WORK A LITTLE HARDER, HUH?

SO, WHAT'S THE CAUSE?
NOW THAT YOU MEN-TION IT, I RE-MEM-BER THAT ...

THEY'VE JUST LOST THEIR APPETITES AND STOPPED BARKING AND SNIFFING ENTIRELY.
HIGUCHI-SAN'S MIKE IS THE SAME WAY.
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH HIS BODY, HIS HEALTH IS JUST FAILING.

IT SEEMS WE'LL NEED TO RE-INVESTIGATE THE AREA.
(GATAN (CLUNK))
TH-THAT'S RIGHT. WE SHOULD GO VISIT THEM AT THE HOSPITAL.
.....
WE CANNOT SHUT OUR EYES TO THIS.
THIS IS, AFTER ALL, A CASE BROUGHT TO US BY A CLIENT.
THE ENTIRE BRIGADE SEEMED TO BE UNITED IN ITS WORRY ABOUT ROUSSEAU.
THE DOG HAD FRIGHTENING CHARISMA, TO HAVE INSPIRED SUCH CONCERN IN ALL OF THEM AFTER ONLY A DAY'S WORTH OF ACTIVITY.

THE FLUFFY LITTLE GUY WAS LIKE A STUFFED ANIMAL. HE DIDN'T SEEM LIKE HE COULD BE VERY TOUGH.

I'LL ADMIT IT, I WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE UNKNOWN CAUSE OF THIS AFFLICTION.

.....

COMING ...

WE'VE COME TO SEE HOW HE'S DOING!

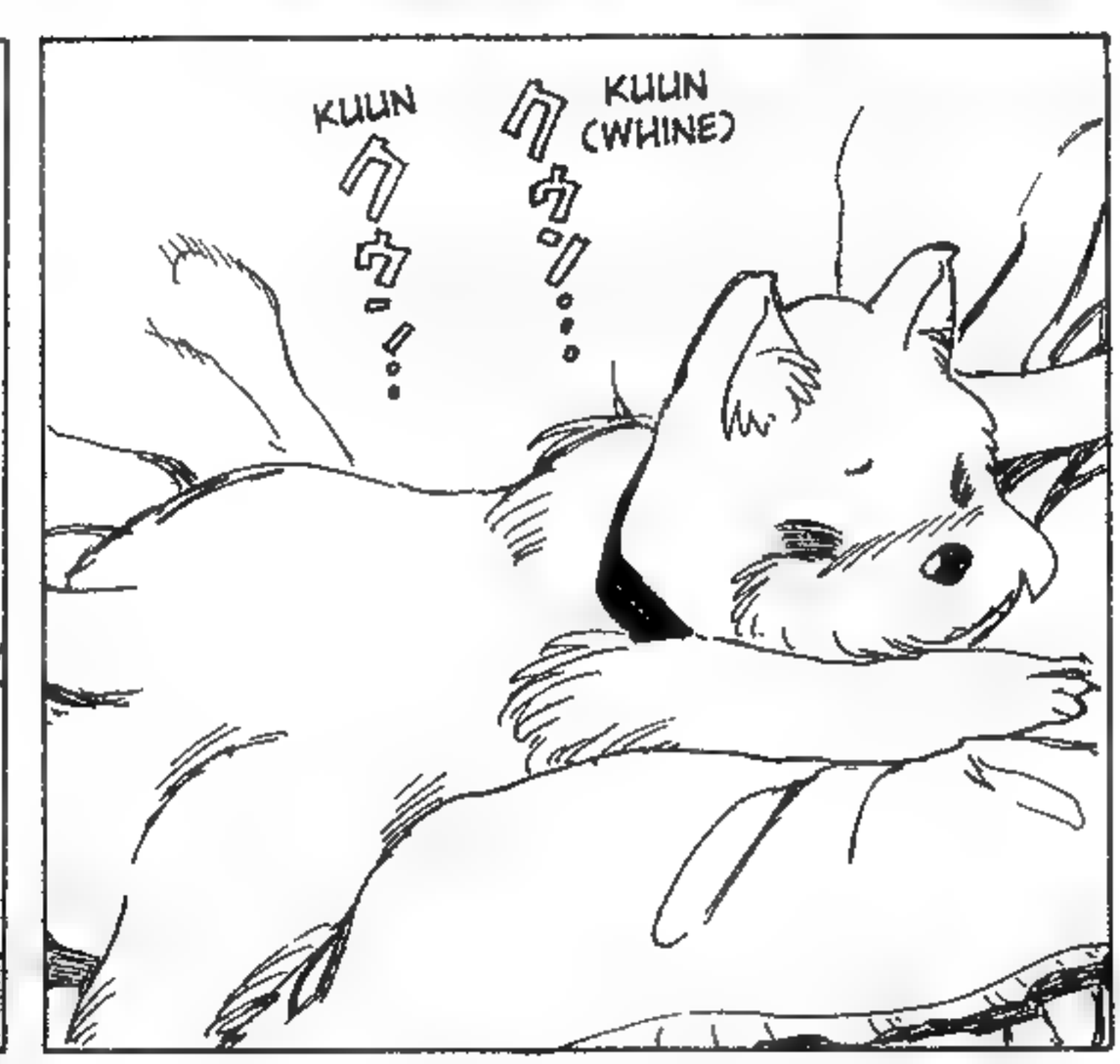
HEY!

EXCUSE US!

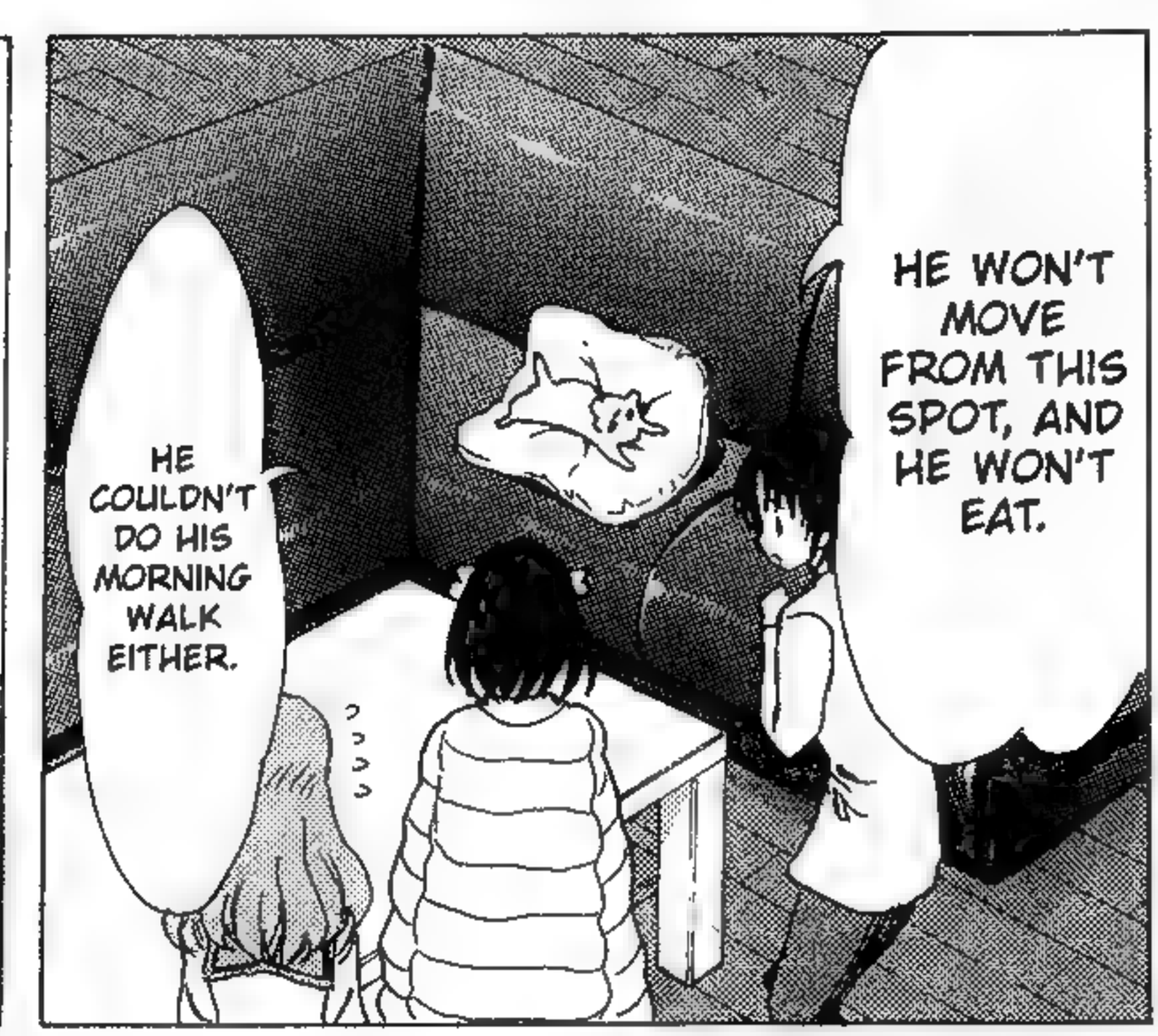
IT WAS HARD TO WATCH.
I COULD SEE HOW DE-PRESSED SHE WAS JUST LOOKING AT HER.

COME ON IN, SUZU-MIYA-SAN...
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMING, EVERY-BODY.

GAAAAN (SHOCK)
ガァァァン
ROU.S. SEAU. SAN...
HOW LONG HAS HE BEEN LIKE THIS?

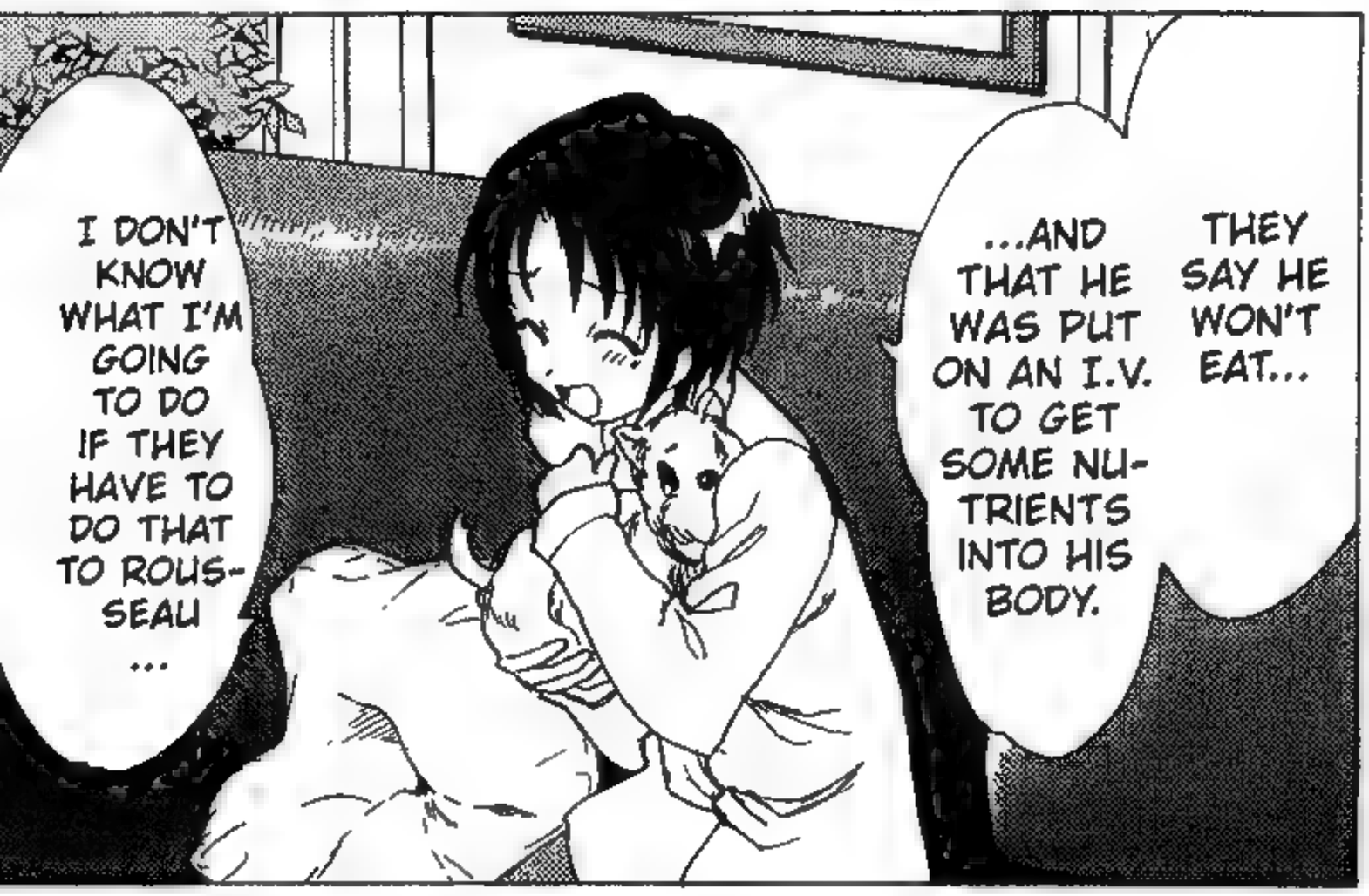

KUUN
クゥゥ!...
KUUN (WHINE)
クゥゥ...

HIGUCHI-SAN'S MIKE IS THE SAME WAY.
HE WAS ROUS-SEAU'S FRIEND, BUT...


HE WON'T MOVE FROM THIS SPOT, AND HE WON'T EAT.
HE COULDN'T DO HIS MORNING WALK EITHER.

WHAT IS MIKE'S CONDITION NOW?
BASED ON YOUR STORY, THEN HIGUCHI'S MIKE SHOULD HAVE BEEN AFFECTED FIVE DAYS AGO.

MAY I ASK SOME-THING?


I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO DO IF THEY HAVE TO DO THAT TO ROUS-SEAU ...
...AND THAT HE WAS PUT ON AN I.V. TO GET SOME NU-TRIENTS INTO HIS BODY.
THEY SAY HE WON'T EAT...

MIKE'S BEEN BAD FOR DAYS AND STILL IS.

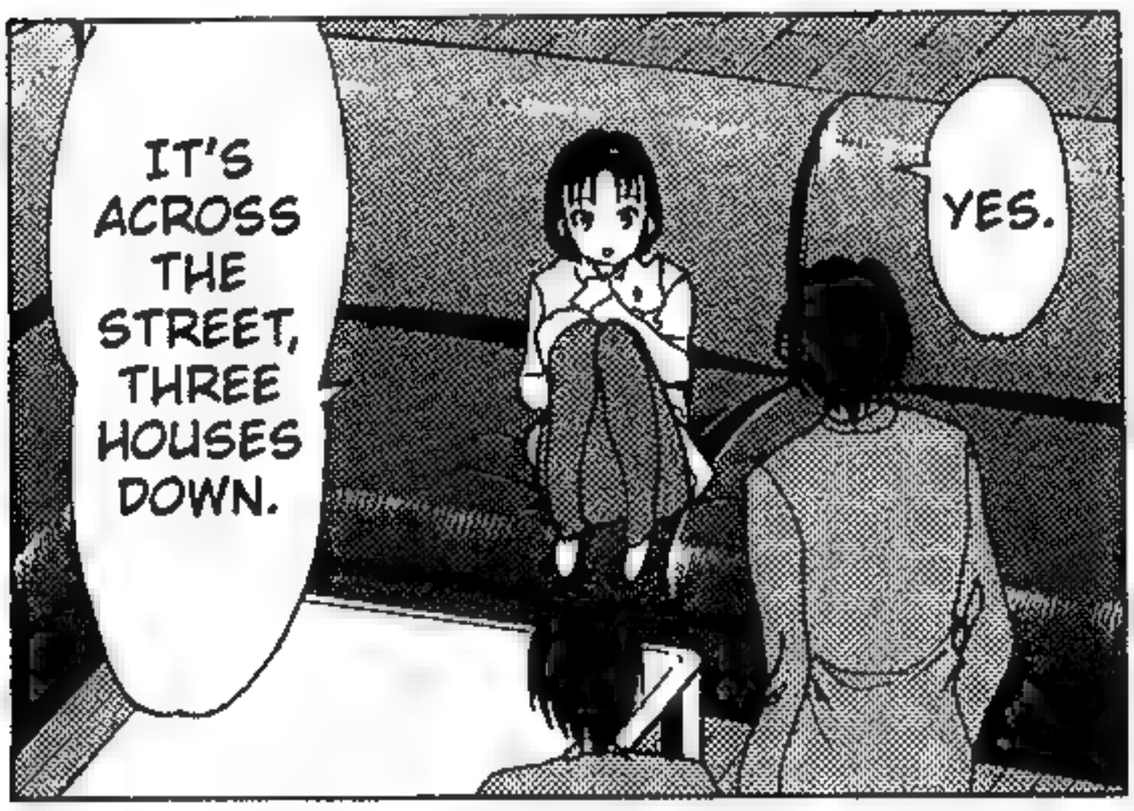
IS IT JUST MIKE AND ROUSSEAU WHO'VE BEEN AFFECTED?
ONE MORE QUES-TION.

I WAS START-ING TO GET GEN-UINELY WORRIED.
IF THINGS KEPT UP THIS WAY, HE'D JUST KEEP GETTING WEAKER.

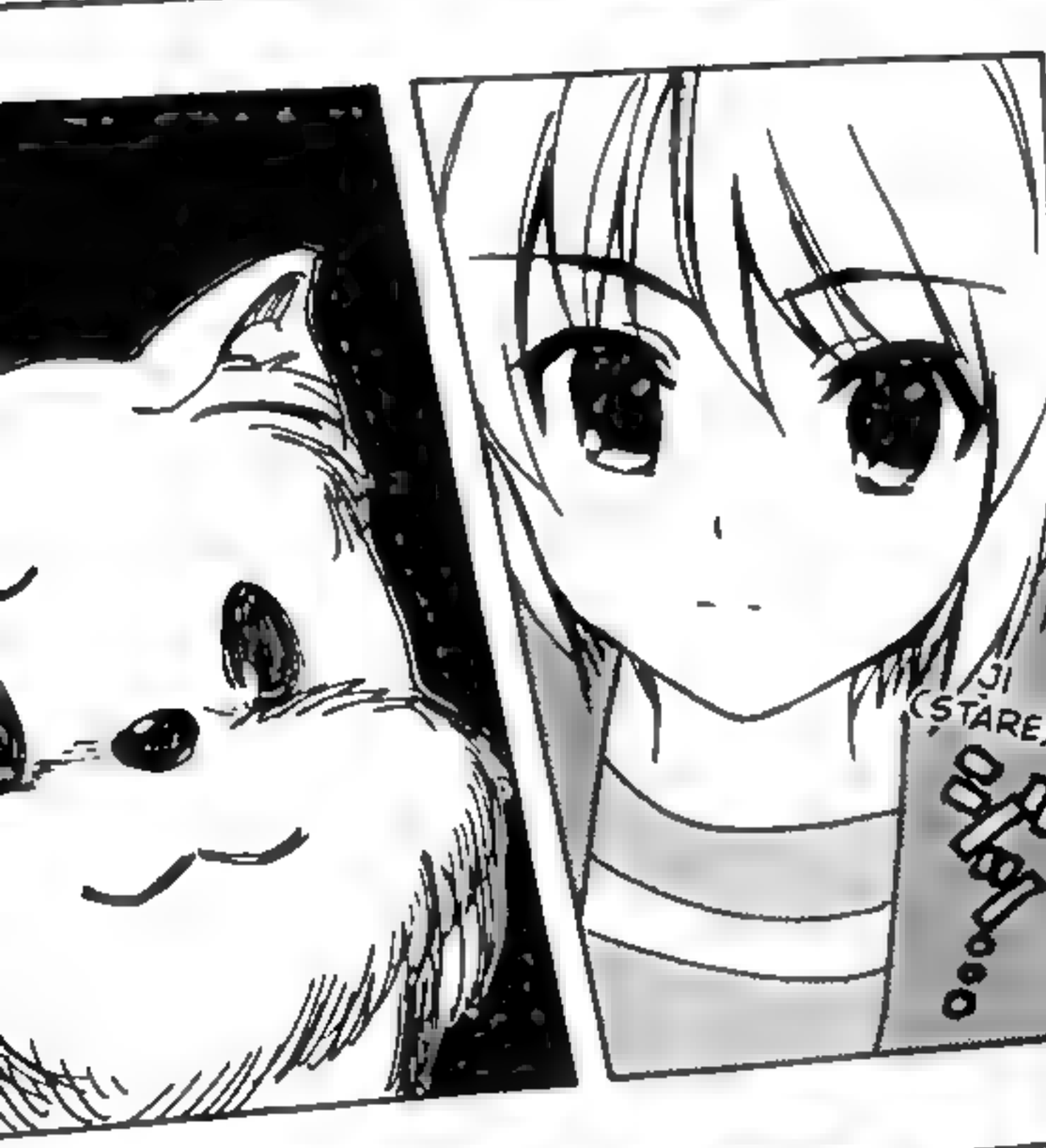
WHEN MIKE GOT SICK, THERE WERE A LOT OF RUMORS ABOUT IT...

...SO IF OTHER DOGS ARE SICK, I'M SURE I WOULD HAVE HEARD ABOUT IT.

I HAVEN'T HEARD IF ANYONE ELSE IS LIKE THIS.



SU
(SHF)


JI
(STARE)

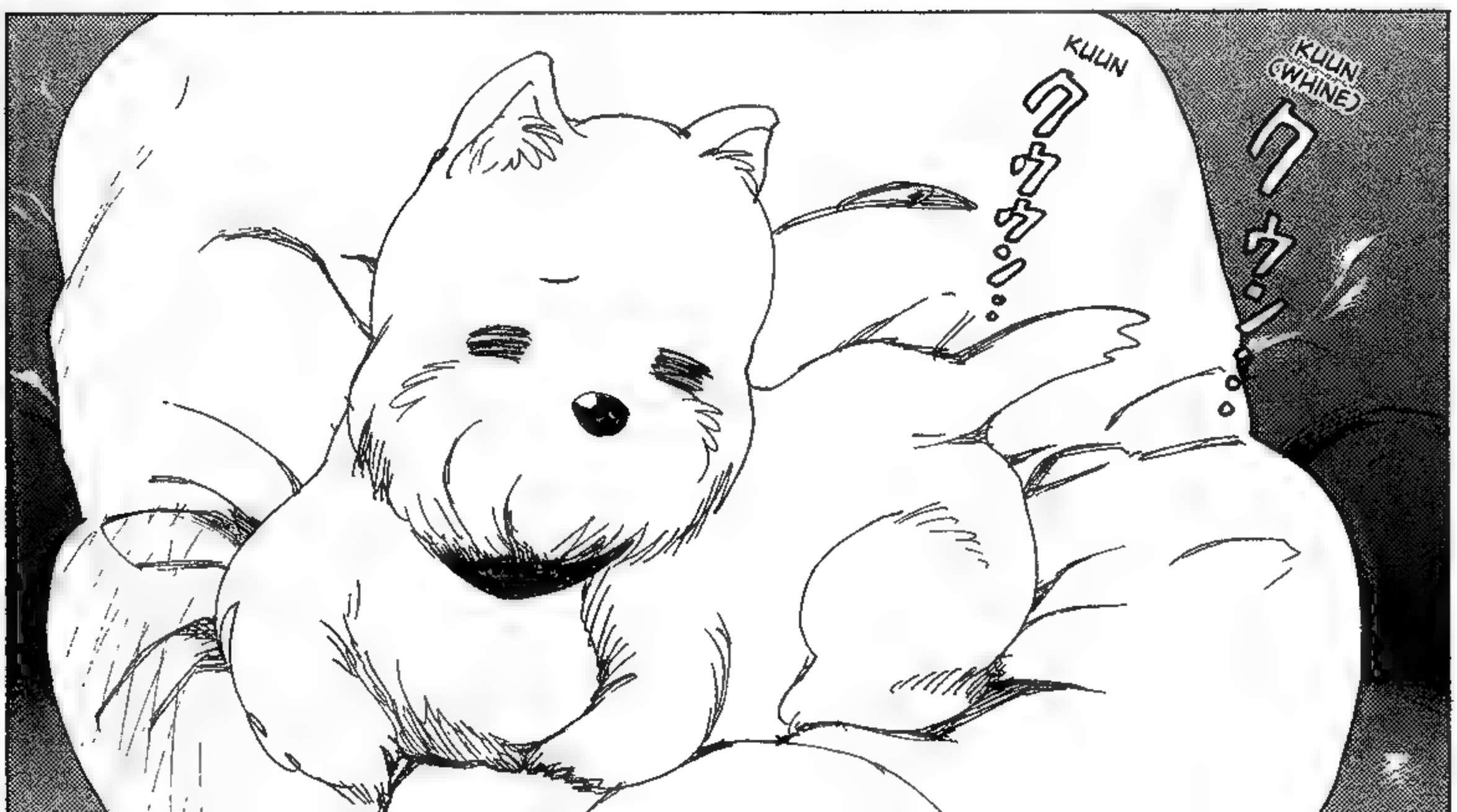
...?

NOT YOU, AND NOT ME.
THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO BY REMAINING HERE.

WE SHOULD RETREAT FOR THE MOMENT.

I GUESS YOU WOULDN'T...
HMM...
YOU DON'T KNOW EITHER, YUKI?
IF NOTHING ELSE, THERE'S SUZUMIYA-SAN'S STATE TO CONSIDER.
POOR DOGGIE...

THERE'S NO HURRY.
BUT WE MUSTN'T WASTE ANY TIME.


KUUN
(KUUN (WHINE)

ALL WE CAN DO IS WATCH AND WAIT.

I EXPECT THE ANIMAL HOSPITAL IS WORKING ON A TREATMENT.

FORTUNATELY, I KNOW SOME VETERINARIANS...

SO IT WAS TIME TO GET THINGS DONE.

IF NOT FOR MARLINI'S SAKE, THEN FOR SAKANAKA AND ROLS-SEAN'S.

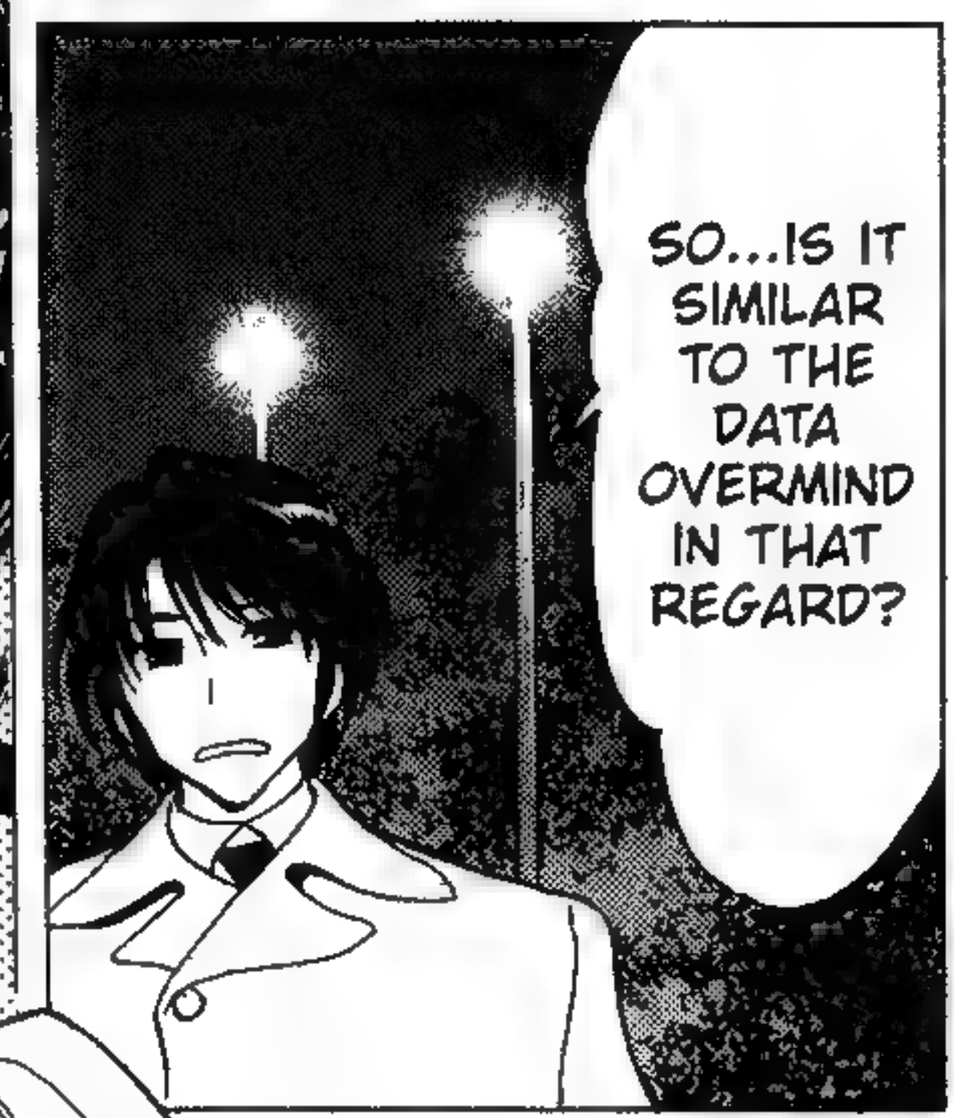
WE NEED TO DEAL WITH THIS BEFORE SHE TAKES SOME KIND OF DISASTROUS ACTION.

AND THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN DO THAT IS...

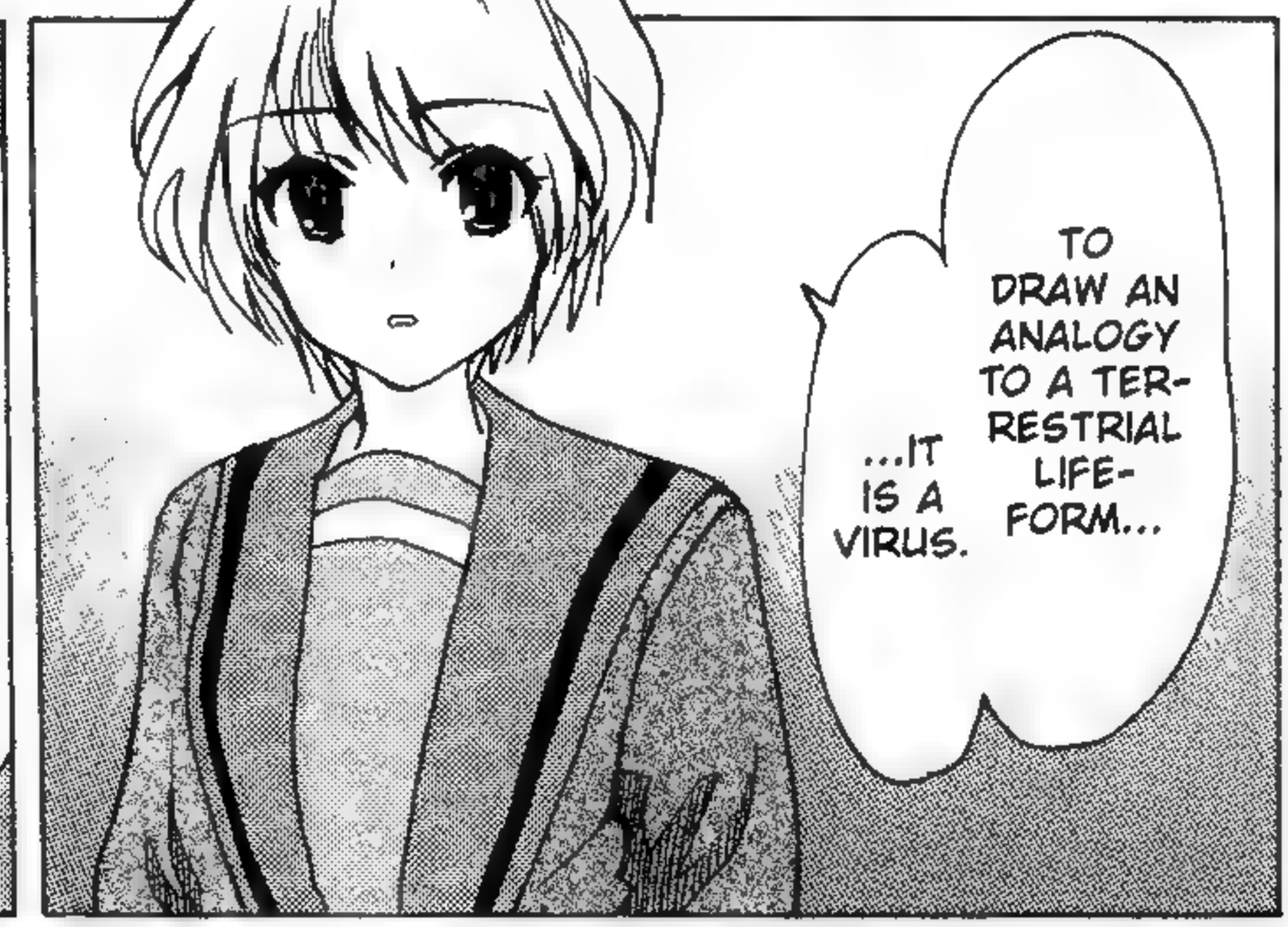
NAGATO.
WHAT IS IT THAT ROUSSEAU'S GOT?
WHAT WAS THAT BACK THERE?
?
A SILICON-BASED SYMBIOTIC DATA LIFE FORM ELEMENT.
A DATA LIFE FORM ELE-MENT.
IT IS NOT VISIBLE TO HUMAN EYES.
IT HAS NO PHYSICAL FORM.
IT IS COMPRISED OF PURE DATA.

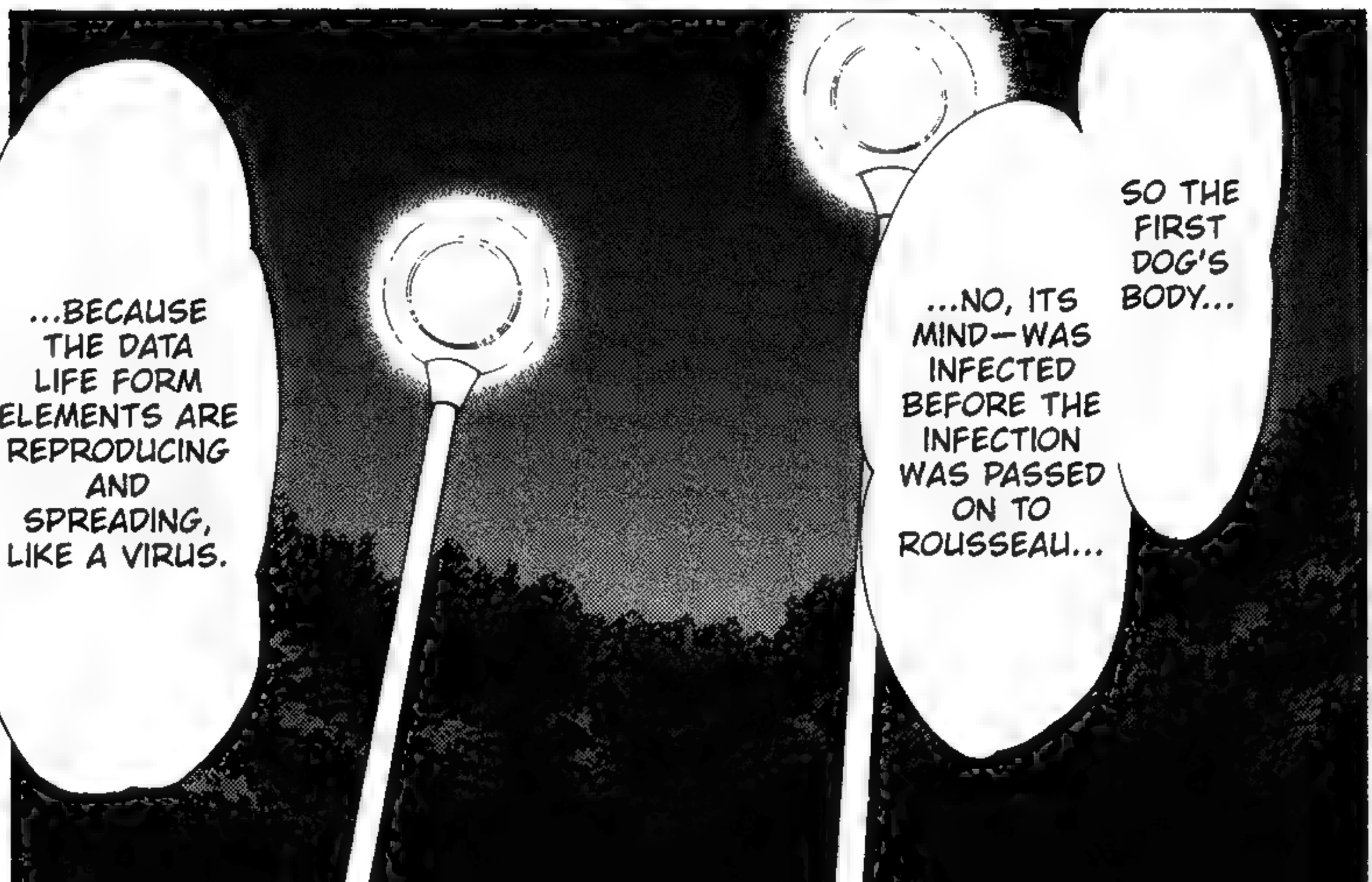
THIS IS FAR MORE PRIMITIVE.
THOSE ARE ON A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT LEVEL.

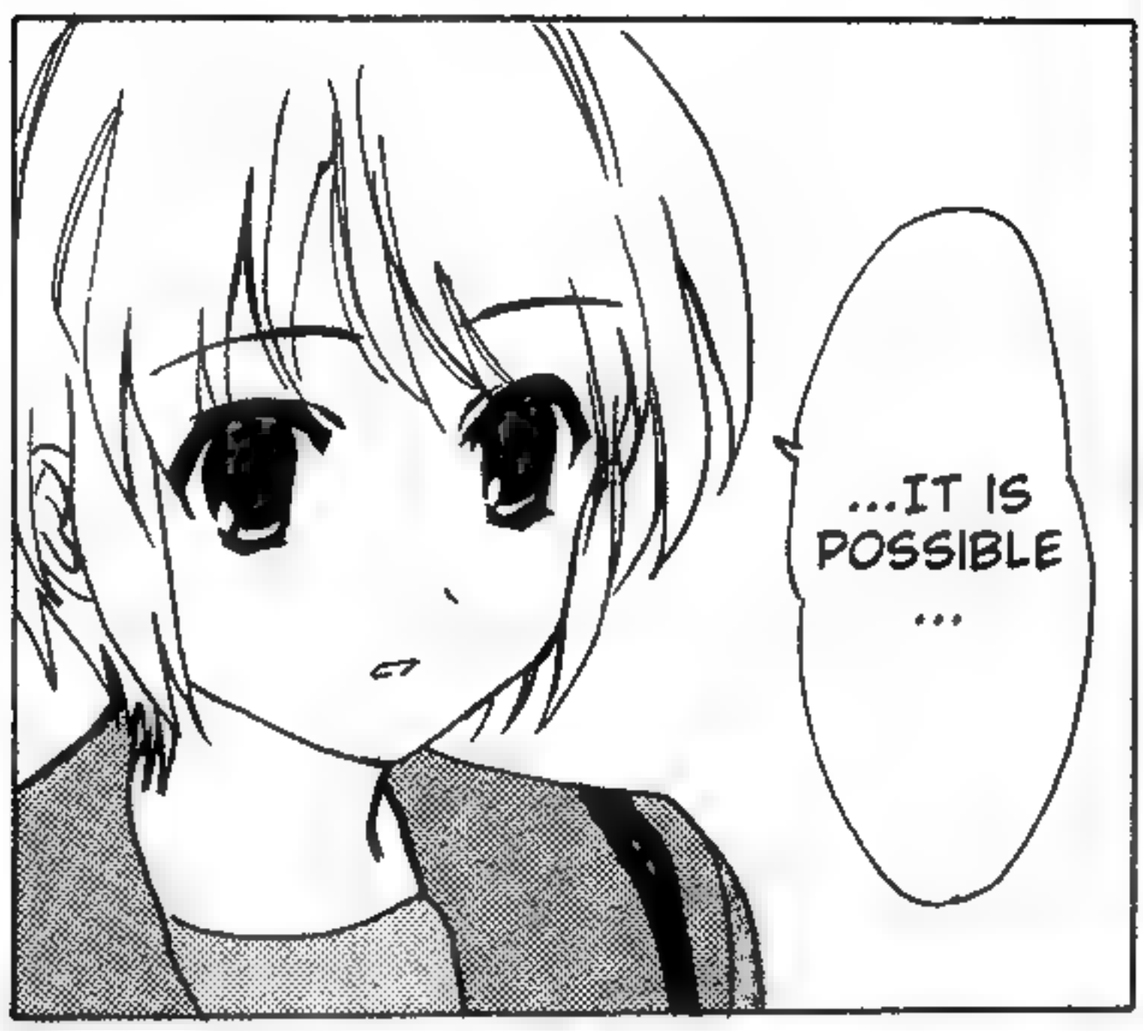
LIKE THE NETWORK INFECTION THAT SPREAD TO THE COMPUTER CLUB PRESIDENT?

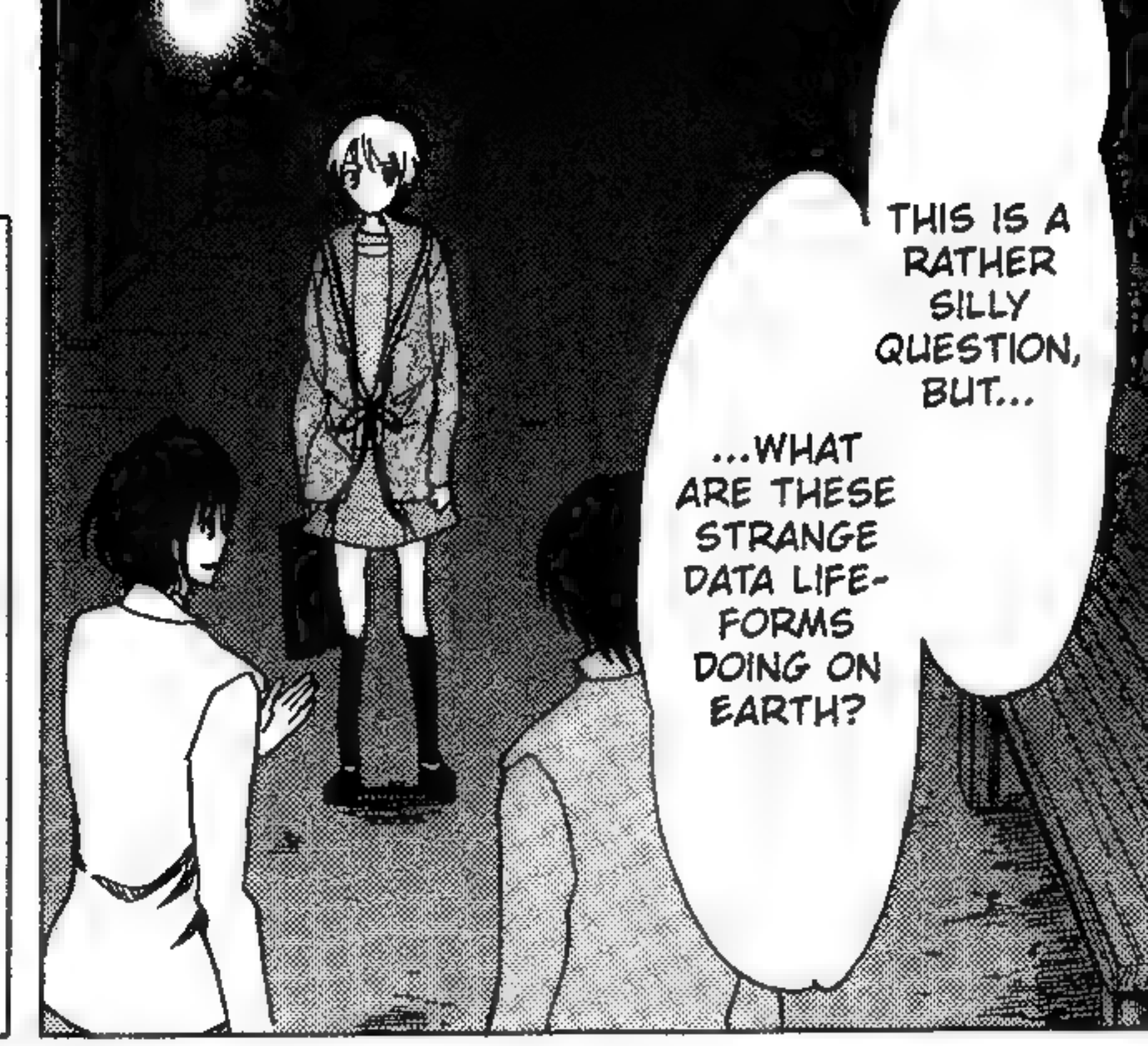

SO...IS IT SIMILAR TO THE DATA OVERMIND IN THAT REGARD?

I SEE. SO THAT'S HOW.


TO DRAW AN ANALOGY TO A TERRESTRIAL LIFE-FORM...
...IT IS A VIRUS.


...BECAUSE THE DATA LIFE FORM ELEMENTS ARE REPRODUCING AND SPREADING, LIKE A VIRUS.
SO THE FIRST DOG'S BODY...
...NO, ITS MIND—WAS INFECTED BEFORE THE INFECTION WAS PASSED ON TO ROUSSEAU...



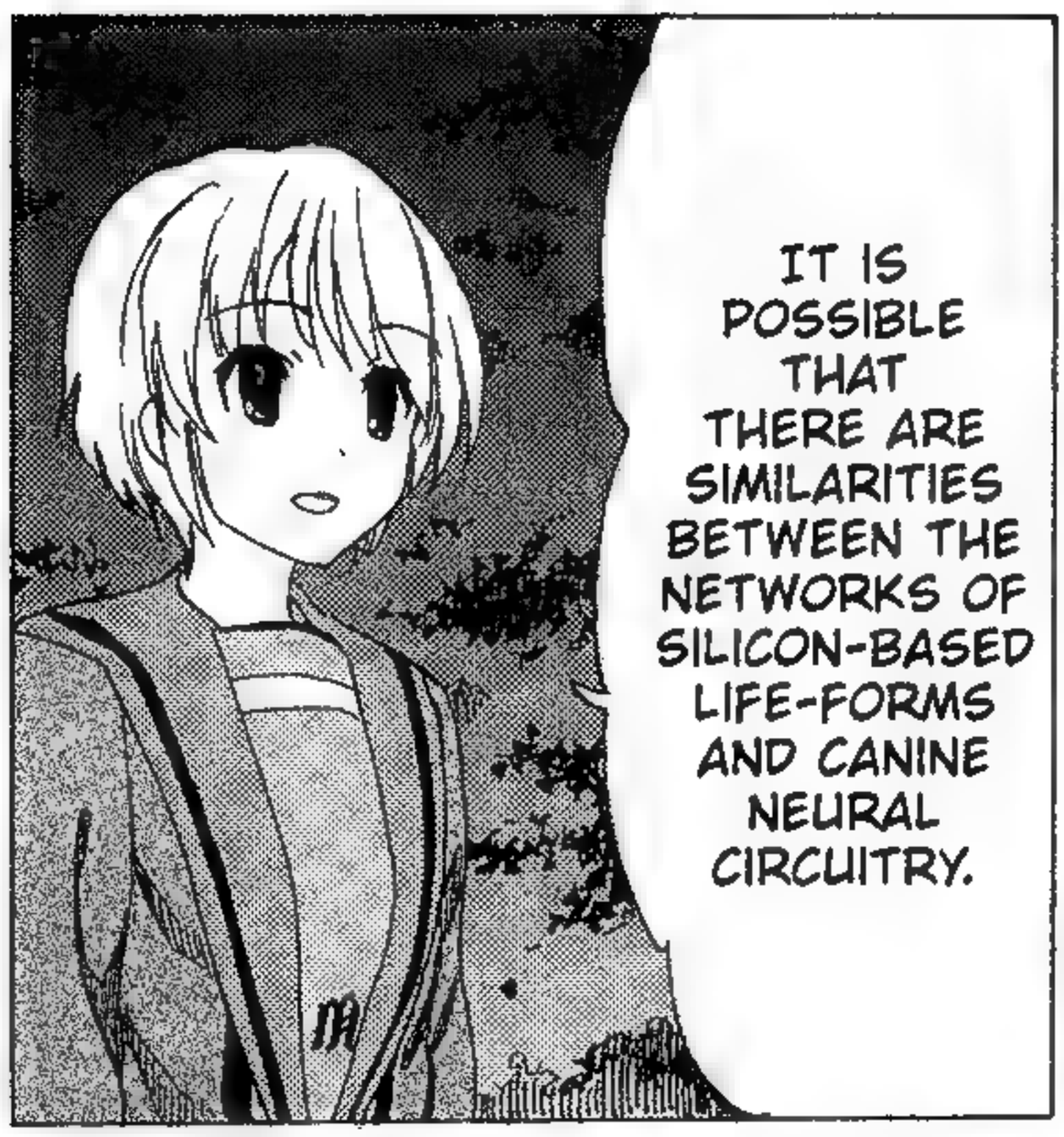


THOSE SILICATE BODIES WERE VAPORIZED BY THE HEAT FROM ATMOSPHERIC FRICTION...

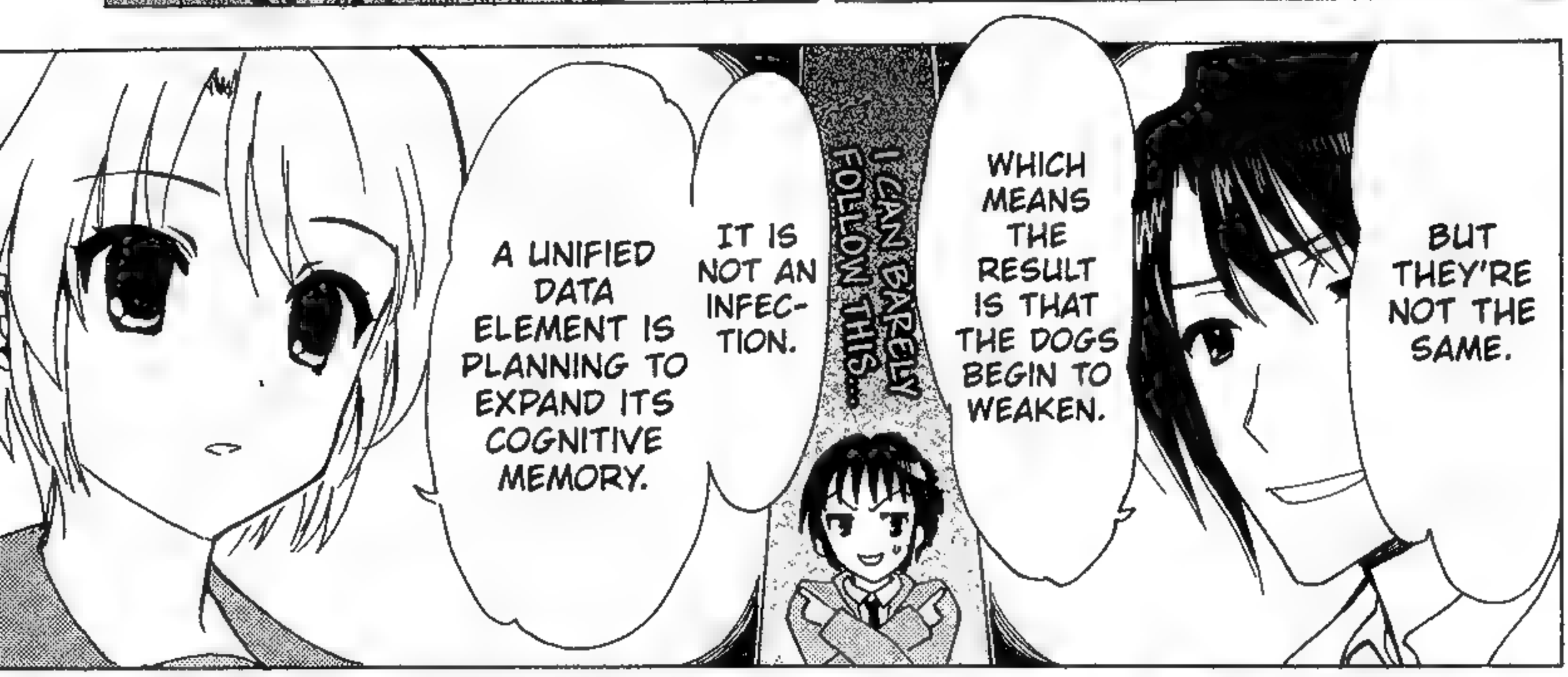
...TO SURMISE THAT THE SILICATE BODIES THAT ACTED AS A SUBSTRATE WERE DRAWN INTO EARTH'S GRAVITY WELL.

BUT DATA LIFE FORMS CAN CONTINUE TO EXIST WHEN THE PHYSICAL MATTER THAT HOUSES THEM IS DESTROYED.

THE REMAINING DATA ELEMENTS THEN MADE CONTACT WITH THE EARTH'S SURFACE.


IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THERE ARE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE NETWORKS OF SILICON-BASED LIFE-FORMS AND CANINE NEURAL CIRCUITRY.

RIGHT WHERE THE DOGS WERE BEING WALKED.
AND THEY HAPPENED TO INFECT A DOG THAT PASSED BY.


BUT THEY'RE NOT THE SAME.
WHICH MEANS THE RESULT IS THAT THE DOGS BEGIN TO WEAKEN.
I CAN BARELY FOLLOW THIS...
IT IS NOT AN INFECTION.
A UNIFIED DATA ELEMENT IS PLANNING TO EXPAND ITS COGNITIVE MEMORY.

SO A SINGLE DOG DOESN'T CONTAIN SUFFICIENT RESOURCES.
BUT I CAN'T IMAGINE IT WILL STOP HAVING SPREAD TO TWO DOGS.
HOW MANY WILL IT NEED?
FOR THE SILICON LIFE-FORM TO RECON-STRUCT ITS COMPLETE NETWORK ...

NOW WAIT JUST A SECOND.

...INFECTING EVERY DOG ON THE PLANET WOULD BE INSUFFICIENT.

UM... ORGANIC LIFE-FORMS?
SO... THEN, WHAT? HUMANS LIKE US, WE'RE...

IT DEPENDS ON HOW "LIFE" IS DEFINED.
.....

YOU'RE SAYING NONORGANIC LIFE-FORMS EXIST TOO?

NO WAY...
YOU SAY IT LIKE IT'S NO BIG DEAL...

IF YOU ARE REFERRING TO ENTITIES WHOSE CON-SCIOUSNESSES ARE CONTAINED WITHIN SILICATE CONSTRUC-TIONS, SUCH ENTITIES EXIST.

BUT SHE'S SAYING THAT ELSEWHERE IN THE UNIVERSE, THERE ARE INORGANIC ENTITIES THAT HAVE GAINED CONSCIOUSNESS ON THEIR OWN.

IT'S A LEVEL OF TECHNOLOGY WE HUMANS HAVE NOT YET ACHIEVED.

THEY'RE PROBABLY A MACHINE LIFE-FORM.

OR PERHAPS IN ALL OF SPACE, SUCH ENTITIES ARE THE NORM, AND WE HUMANS ARE THE EXCEPTION.

...IS DETERMINED BY AN ENTITY'S ABILITY TO COLLECT DATA, THEN INDEPENDENTLY PROCESS THAT STORED DATA.

INTELLIGENCE...

IT WAS THOUGHT THAT SUCH ENTITIES COULD NEVER DEVELOP INTELLIGENCE.

ORGANIC LIFE-FORMS POSSESS ABSOLUTE LIMITS ON THEIR DATA ACCUMULATION AND TRANSMISSION CAPABILITIES.

THE DATA LIFE FORM ELEMENT ATTACHES SYMBIOTICALLY TO THE SILICON LIFE-FORMS, AUGMENTING THEIR COGNITIVE ABILITIES.
EACH ENTITY BENEFITS THE OTHER.
IN ORDER TO HARVEST AND PROCESS MORE DATA, IT REQUIRED PHYSICAL NETWORK CIRCUITRY.
ORIGINALLY, THE DATA LIFE FORM WAS NO MORE THAN AN ISOLATED CLUMP OF INFORMATION.
THUS THEY HAVE NO WILL TO LIVE OR SELF-PRESERVATION CONCEPTS.
THEY DO NOTHING OTHER THAN COGITATE.
THEIR ACTIVITIES AS LIFE-FORMS ARE LIMITED TO COGNITION.

DO THEY HAVE SOULS?
WHAT ABOUT HUMANS?
ARE YOU SAYING EVEN IF OUR BODY IS DESTROYED, THE SPIRIT REMAINS?
YOU'RE PRETTY TALKATIVE TODAY, NAGATO.
THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT YOU TO TELL ME.
A CON-SCIOUSNESS THAT LIVES ON WHEN ITS CONTAINER IS DESTROYED...
...THAT SURE SOUNDS LIKE A GHOST TO ME.
WE HAVE BRAINS THAT THINK, WHICH MEANS THERE'S A CONSCIOUSNESS IN THERE SOMEWHERE.

.....
THAT... IS CLAS-SIFIED.
WHAT THE—
...DID NAGATO JUST CRACK THE FIRST JOKE OF HER LIFE?

THIS MYSTERIOUS EXPRESSION ON HER FACE... I'LL MAKE SURE TO REMEMBER THIS.

HA HA...

AND THE SECOND AFTER SHE SAID IT...

...I COULD'VE SWORN SHE SMILED FAINTLY AT HER OWN JOKE.

I DON'T REALLY GET IT, BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE A PAIN.

HOWEVER, WE WILL NEED A BIOLOGICAL NETWORK TO CONTAIN THE ARCHIVED DATA.

...AND COMPRESS THEM INTO AN ARCHIVE, HALTING THEIR ACTIVITY.

WE MUST GAIN CONTROL OF THE RELEVANT DATA LIFE FORM ELEMENTS ...

DELE-TION IS NOT POS-SIBLE. PER-MISSION HAS NOT BEEN GRANTED.

CAN'T WE JUST WIPE IT OUT?

WHAT, FROM YOUR BOSS?

PERMIS-SION?

THIS DATA LIFE FORM IS A BENEFICIAL BEING.

SO SHE FINALLY FELT COMFORTABLE MAKING A JOKE.

IF THAT BROUGHT HER ANY HAPPINESS AT ALL...THEN AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF HUMANITY, I CAN'T HELP BUT BE A LITTLE INTERESTED.

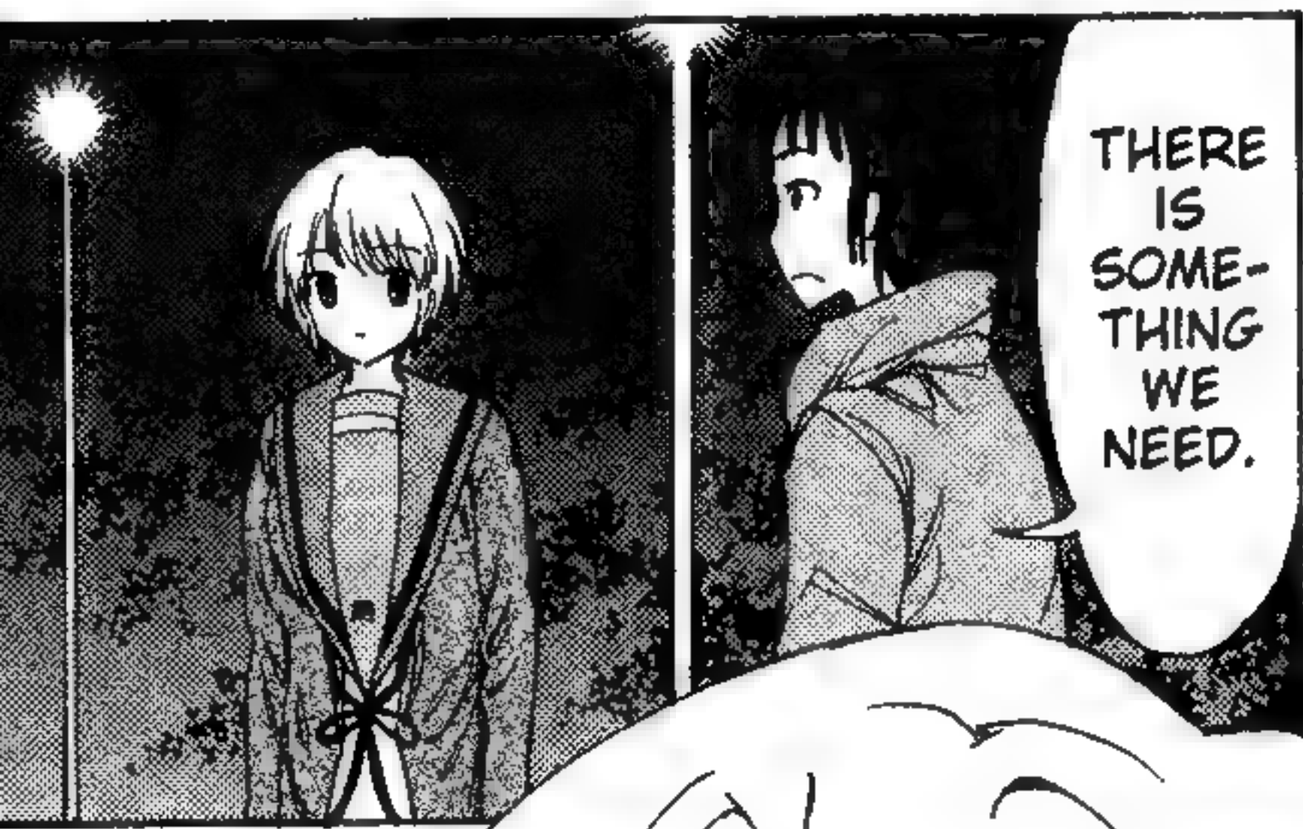
Wandering Shadow II : END

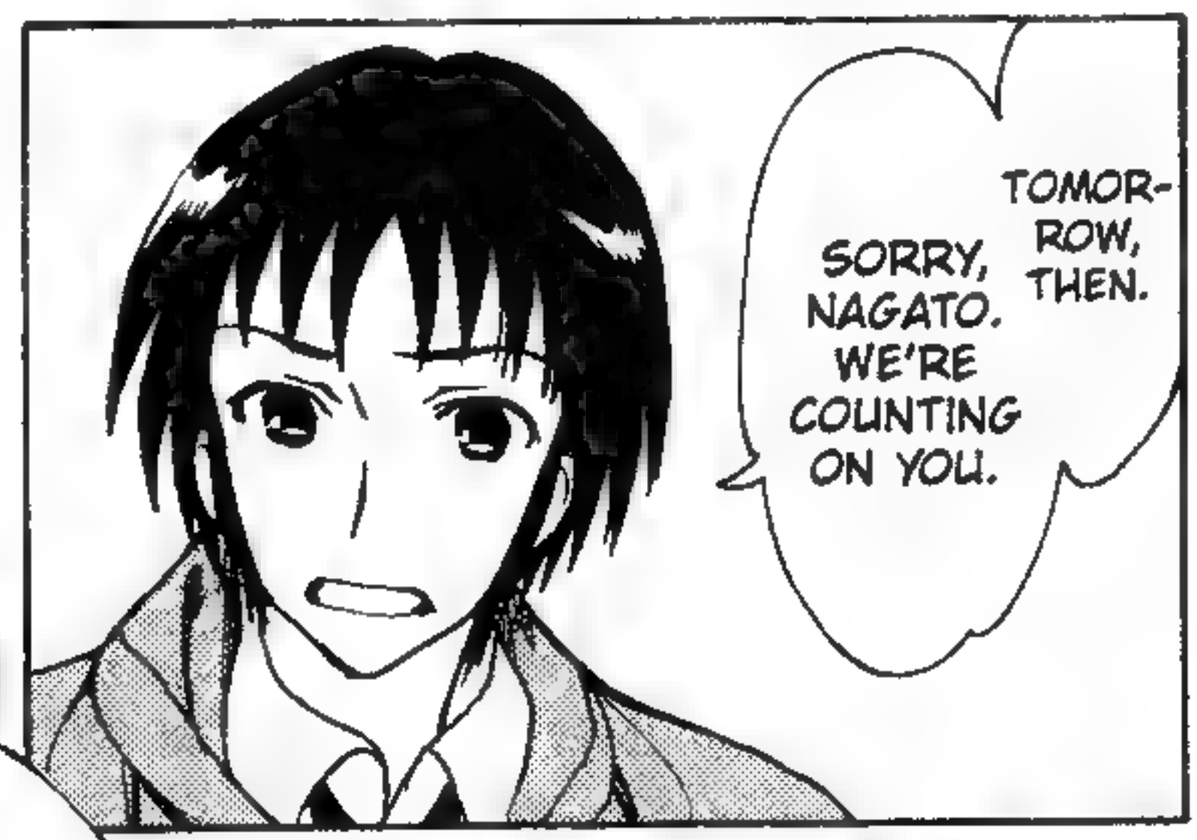
WANDERING SHADOW III
PER-MISSION HAS NOT BEEN GRANTED.
DELETION IS NOT POSSIBLE.
HOWEVER, WE WILL NEED A BIOLOGICAL NETWORK TO CONTAIN THE ARCHIVED DATA.
WE MUST GAIN CONTROL OF THE RELEVANT DATA LIFE FORM ELEMENTS ...
...AND COMPRESS THEM INTO AN ARCHIVE, HALTING THEIR ACTIVITY.
...BUT APPARENTLY WE HAD TO HELP IT OUT.
IT WAS HARD TO IMAGINE THAT ANYTHING THAT HAD GIVEN US THIS MUCH TROUBLE COULD BE BENEFICIAL ...

Wandering Shadow III

YOU'LL HAVE TO COME UP WITH SOME REASON OR ANOTHER.
WE'LL VISIT SAKANAKA AGAIN TOMORROW.
THERE'S NO SCHOOL.
TRUE.

PERHAPS NOT IMMEDIATELY, BUT...
...WE WILL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS.


THERE IS SOMETHING WE NEED.


SORRY, NAGATO. WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU.
TOMORROW, THEN.

THE CAT AT YOUR HOUSE WOULD BE IDEAL.
A CAT.

IT TURNS THAT NAGATO ONCE READ A BOOK THAT HAD A DOG WITH A SIMILAR SICKNESS.
SO ABOUT ROUSSEAU.

Yeah, the treat-ment was in there too.
NO WAY!

OF COURSE IT IS!
I can't say for sure it'll go well, but... it's worth trying, right?

HARUHI?
YEAH, IT'S ME.

SO WE'LL MEET UP AGAIN TOMOR-ROW AT SAKA-NAKA'S ...
...I MEAN, NAGATO, IT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT'S GOING TO SUDDENLY GET WORSE...
ACCORD-ING TO KOIZU...

NO, WE DON'T HAVE TO GO RIGHT NOW.
EH?

OKAY, SEE YOU TOMOR-ROW. 9 A.M.
YEAH, HIM TOO.
TELL THEM TO BRING HIM TO SAKA-NAKA'S PLACE.
MIKE OR WHAT-EVER?
... THERE WAS ANOTHER DOG, RIGHT?
OH, ALSO ...
BEAU-TIFULLY DONE.
THAT SHOULD DO IT, RIGHT?
INDEED. UNTIL TOMOR-ROW...
YEAH, I'M GETTING THAT FEELING.
DON'T LOOK SO PESSI-MISTIC.
I'M SURE EVERY-THING WILL GO WELL.

HARUHI AND ASAHINA-SAN BOTH WORE SERIOUS EXPRESSIONS.
THEY DIDN'T LOOK LIKE THEIR USUAL SELVES.
THE NEXT DAY...
WHILE WE WERE WAITING, WE HEARD THE SITUATION FROM KOIZUMI.
BUT I GUESS YOU HAVE GOOD TIMING.
YOU'RE LATE.
IS THAT SOME NEW KIND OF FAIRY FROM POLYNESIA OR SOMETHING?
SUN-CAT?
FOR SOMETHING CALLED "SUN-CAT"!
YUKI'S GOING TO TRY SOME KIND OF FOLK REMEDY?

Oh...

IT'S A VERY RARE AFFLICTION.

A SORT OF NEUROSIS, REALLY.

LISTEN TO THIS GUY.

IT'S WHEN AN OTHERWISE ACTIVE DOG SUDDENLY LOSES ALL OF ITS ENERGY.

IT'S THE ILLNESS WE BELIEVE ROUSSEAU HAS CONTRACTED.

カックン

KAKKUN (NOD)

RIGHT?

OR SO NAGATO HAS EXPLAINED TO ME.

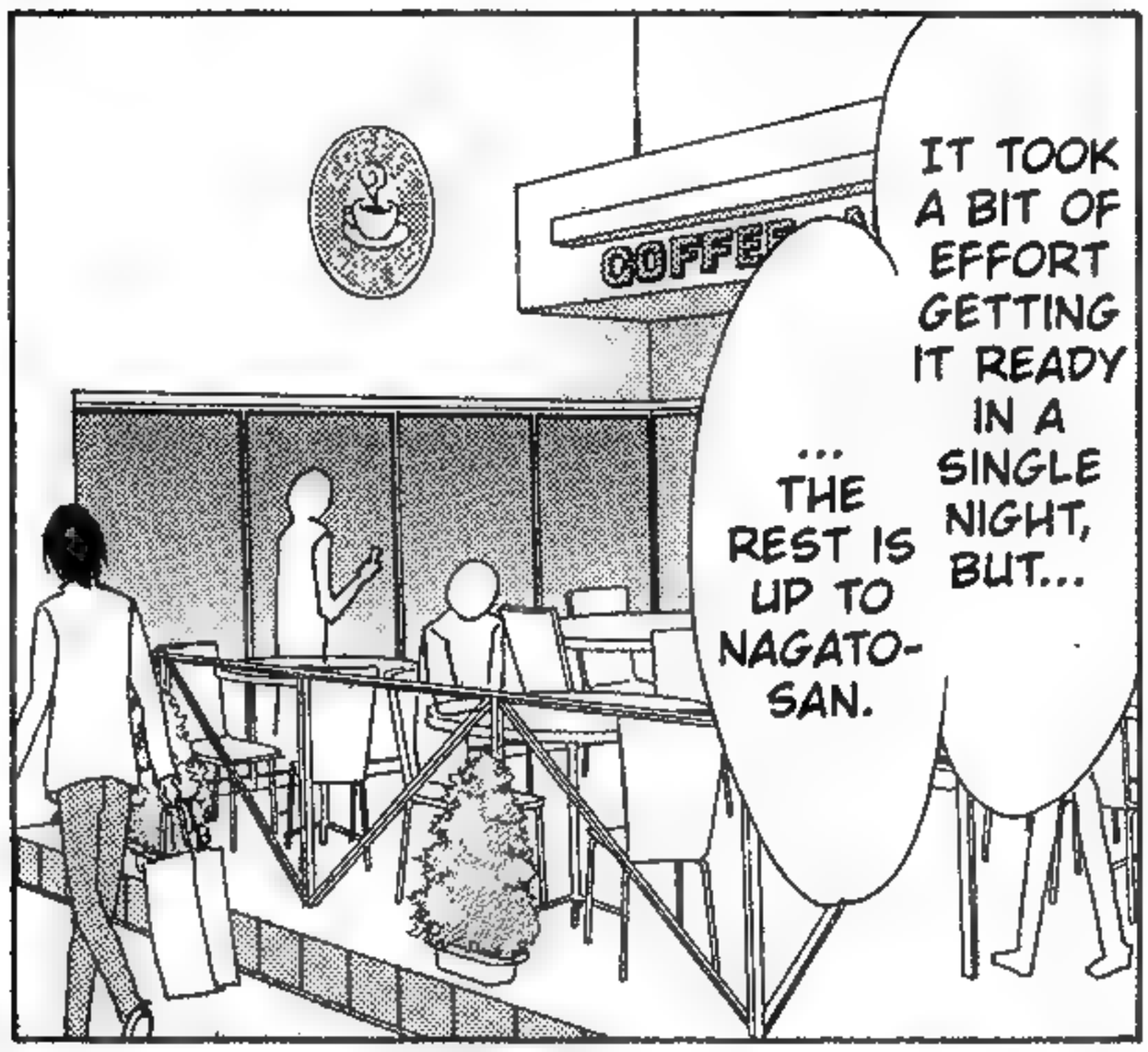
SO, YOU BROUGHT HIM ALONG, THEN?

YUP.

SO THAT'S THE SETUP THEY WENT WITH, HUH?

YUKI, ARE YOU SURE THIS IS OKAY?
CAN WE TRUST THIS BOOK?
CAGE

IT'S SO WEIRD TO NEED A CAT TO TREAT A DISEASE.


COFFEE
IT TOOK A BIT OF EFFORT GETTING IT READY IN A SINGLE NIGHT, BUT...
... THE REST IS UP TO NAGATO-SAN.

DON'T WORRY.
I'VE PREPARED SUITABLE TOOLS.

WHAT I'M WORRIED ABOUT IS CLEANING UP AFTERWARD.
SHE'LL SAVE ROUSSEAU FOR SURE.
I DON'T HAVE ANY DOUBTS ABOUT NAGATO'S ABILITIES.

THIS IS JUST MY INTUITION, BUT I DON'T THINK THIS WILL BE TOO TROUBLE-SOME.

THAT'LL BE MY JOB.

GATAN

I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT.

HER HIGHEST PRIORITY RIGHT NOW IS TO CURE ROUSSEAU.

YOU'LL SEE IF YOU WATCH SUZU-MIYA-SAN.

GATAN (CLUNK)

THERE WERE ONLY TWO MORE STOPS BEFORE SAKANAKA'S NEIGHBOR-HOOD.

THERE WASN'T MUCH TIME LEFT TO THINK.

GATAN

3954

YOU MIGHT NOT THINK IT, BUT YUKI'S SUPER-DEPEND-ABLE!

LEAVE IT TO US, SAKANAKA-SAN!

SUZUMIYA-SAN...

AND THAT MUST BE MIKE...

HIGUCHI-SAN LOOKS LIKE SHE GOES TO A WOMEN'S COLLEGE SOME-WHERE.

I NEVER WOULD'VE GUESSED WE'D COME OVER THREE TIMES IN ONE WEEK.

THIS IS OUR THIRD VISIT HERE.

KOIZUMI-KUN! YUKI!

ばっ BA (WHAP)

OKAY, LET'S GET READY!

HE DEFINITELY LOOKS EXHAUSTED ...

SHU (SHFF)

KACHA (CLICK)

VERY WELL, THEN.

THAT'S SETTING THE MOOD, ALL RIGHT!

NOW, IF YOU'LL BRING SHAMISEN OUT...

CAN I ASK YOU TO PUT YOUR DOG NEXT TO ROUSSEAU?
ER, YES...
NOW, THEN ...

SHI
(SHF)
SHI
FU
(PHEW)

IT IS FINISHED.

WHAT DID YOU DO JUST NOW?

AH!

YOU MEAN... THAT'S IT?

AH...

KUUUN

クゥゥゥ

KUUUN (WHINE)

クゥゥゥ

KYUU (WHIMPER)

キュ

AMAZING!

THAT'S OUR YUKI!

ROUS-SEAU!

MIKE!

WA (CHEER)

AND WITH-OUT ANY SILICON-WHATEVER NONSENSE.

YOU BETTER EXPLAIN THIS, KOIZUMI.

HEE HEE...

THIS HURTS TO LISTEN TO...IT HURTS...

DOGS ARE EVEN MORE SENSITIVE TO THE AROMATIC CANDLE THAN HUMANS ARE.

...WAS A GROUND-BREAKING FORM OF ANIMAL THERAPY BETWEEN ANIMALS, USING THE CAT.

WHAT NAGATO-SAN PERFORMED ...

YOU KNEW STUFF EVEN THE VET-ERINARIAN DIDN'T KNOW!

THAT'S REALLY AMAZING, NAGATO-SAN!

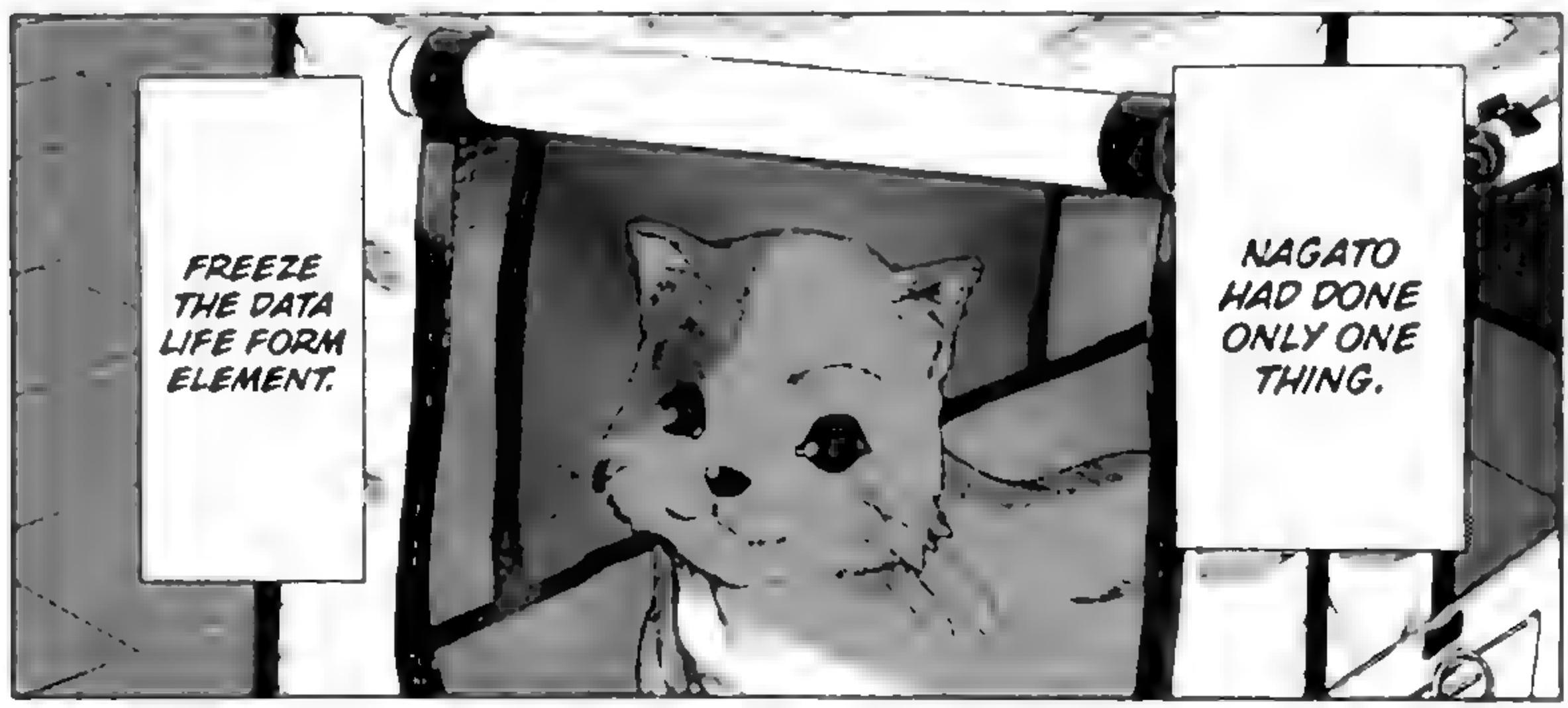
WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT LOGICALLY, SHE'S A LITTLE TOO AMAZING.

SHE'S EVEN NATION-AL-LEVEL AT SPORTS!

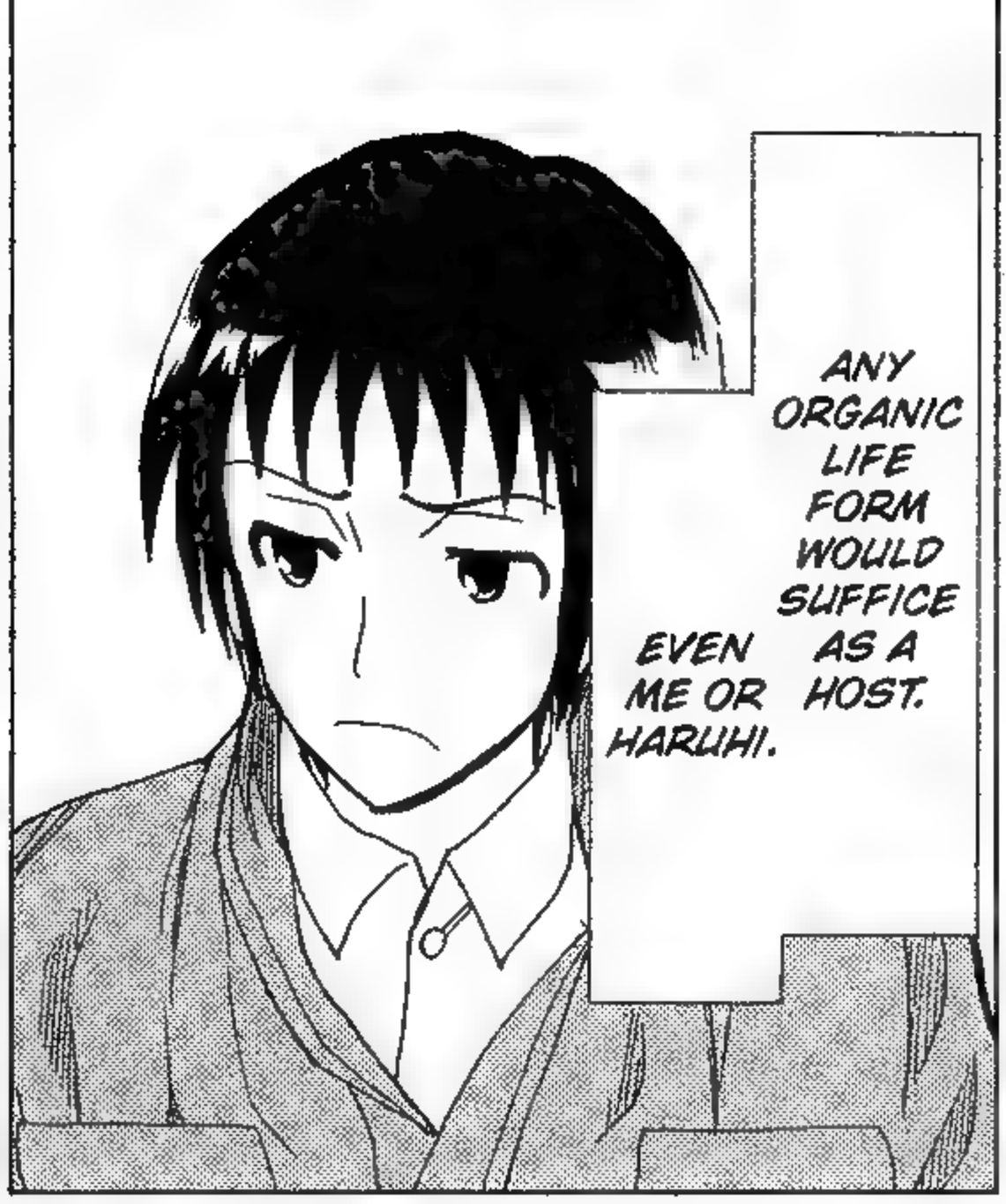
SHE'S READ A MILLION BOOKS, PLAYS THE GUITAR...

THAT'S OUR YUKI. SHE'S THE SOS BRIGADE'S NUMBER ONE ALL-ROUNDER.

CAN'T HELP BUT THINK HE'S LAYING IT ON PRETTY THICK...
IT SEEMS ONE CAN'T DISMISS FOLK REMEDIES OUT OF HAND.
THERE ARE TREATMENTS IN CHINESE MEDICINE WHOSE EFFECTIVENESS CAN'T BE EXPLAINED.


FREEZE THE DATA LIFE FORM ELEMENT.
NAGATO HAD DONE ONLY ONE THING.

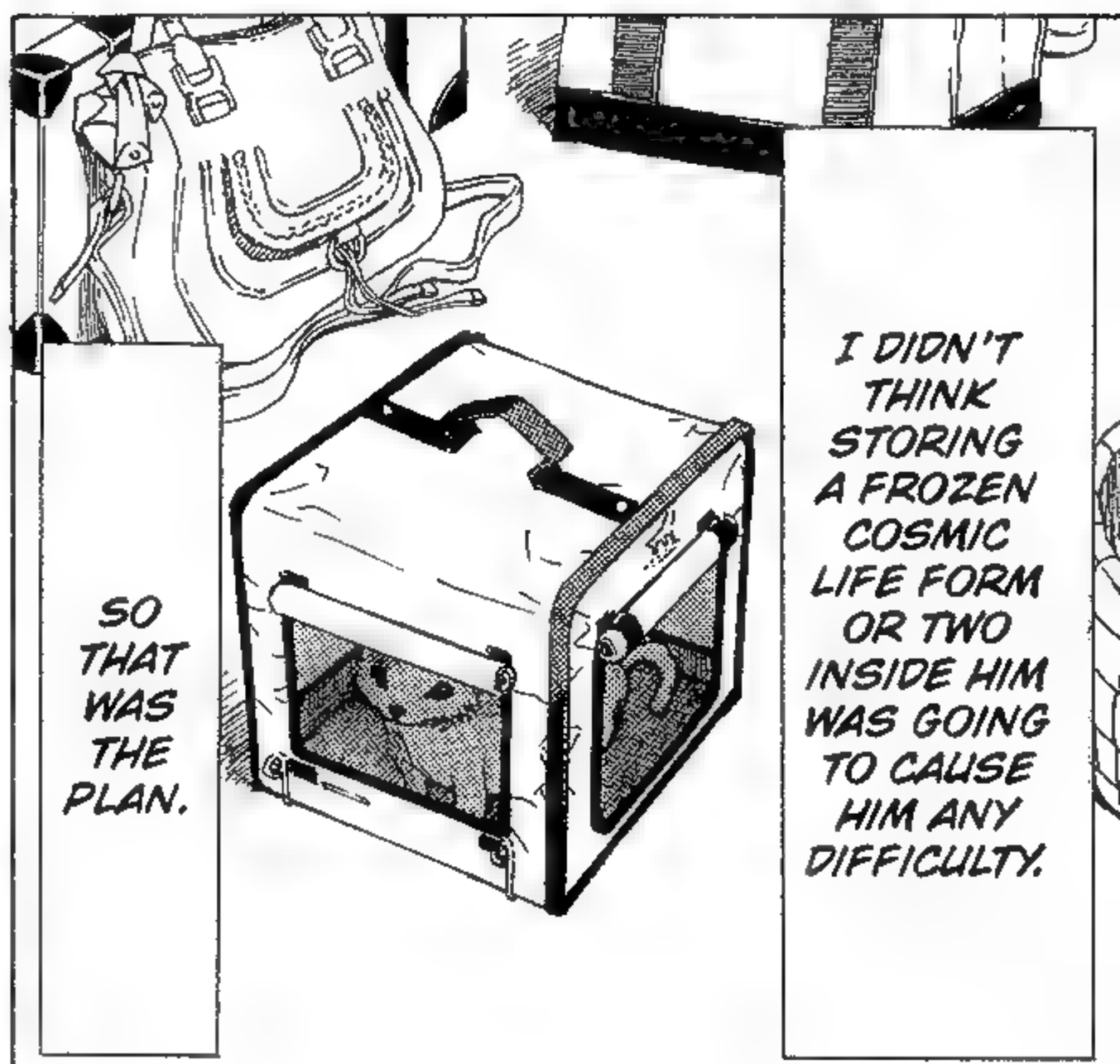
WHEN ROUSSEAU OR MIKE REACHED THE END OF HIS NATURAL LIFE, THE FROZEN DATA LIFE FORM WOULD REMAIN.
BUT THAT COULD'VE CAUSED PROBLEMS LATER.
SHE COULD HAVE FROZEN IT WITHIN THE TWO DOGS.

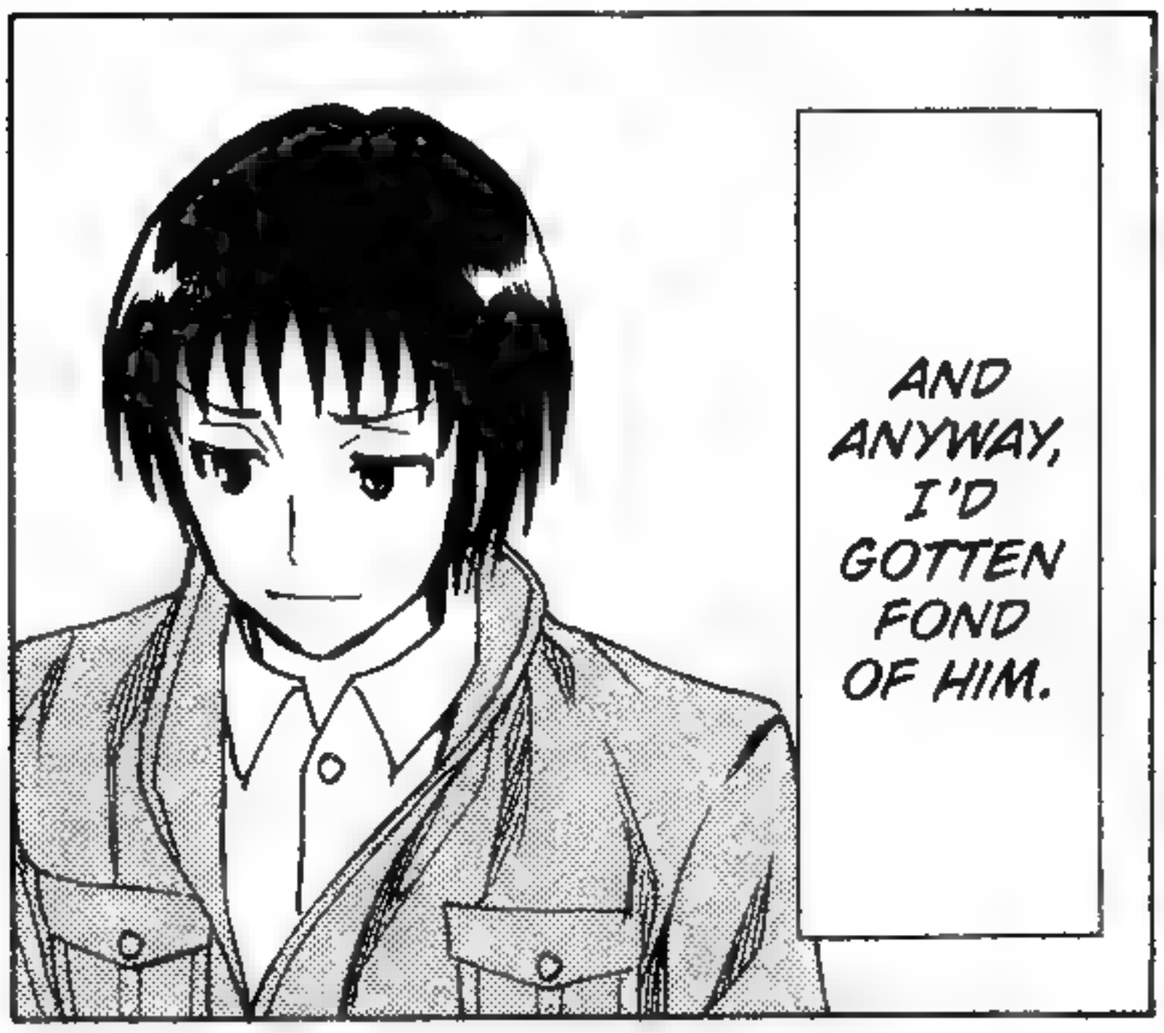

ANY ORGANIC LIFE FORM WOULD SUFFICE AS A HOST.
EVEN ME OR HARUHI.

SO WE DECIDED IT WOULD BE BETTER TO PLACE IT IN A FORM WE COULD CONTIN-UOUSLY MONITOR.

THIS MALE CALICO WHO OCCASIONALLY GAINED THE ABILITY TO SPEAK HUMAN LANGUAGE...
BUT NAGATO IDENTIFIED SHAMISEN AS THE ONE LEAST LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE PROBLEMS.

WHILE SAKANAKA HAD CERTAINLY SUFFERED MISFORTUNE, THE SOURCE OF THAT MISFORTUNE HAD NOW BEEN TRANS-FERRED INTO MY CAT.
GEEZ.


SO THAT WAS THE PLAN.
I DIDN'T THINK STORING A FROZEN COSMIC LIFE FORM OR TWO INSIDE HIM WAS GOING TO CAUSE HIM ANY DIFFICULTY.


AND ANYWAY, I'D GOTTEN FOND OF HIM.

SHAMI! SHAMI!
IT WOULD TAKE A LOT OF EFFORT TO CONVINCE MY SISTER.
I COULD HAND HIM OVER TO NAGATO ...BUT NO.

HE MIGHT EVEN START TALKING AGAIN SOMEDAY.
SHAMISEN WAS THE HERO HERE.

IT'S FINE, IT'S FINE!

SUZUMIYA-SAN, EVERYBODY, THANK YOU SO MUCH.
I DON'T KNOW HOW I CAN EVER REPAY YOU...

THE FEELING WE GET SEEING THEM HEALTHY IS MORE THAN ENOUGH COMPENSATION.

MY SOS BRIGADE ISN'T A FOR-PROFIT ESTABLISHMENT, ANYWAY.

WE DON'T NEED MONEY OR GOODS.

ON THE WAY BACK, HARUHI CHATTED WITH ASAHINA ABOUT DOGS.

SHE SEEMED TO HAVE FORGOTTEN ABOUT A CERTAIN SOMETHING ENTIRELY.

AND IT WOULD MAKE THINGS EASIER FOR ME IF SHE STAYED THAT WAY.

IT WOULD BE VERY GOOD IF HARUHI AND SAKANAKA WERE IN THE SAME CLASS NEXT YEAR.

LAST YEAR AS WELL, WITH KIMIDORI-SAN.
NAGATO-SAN REALLY SAVED US.

THE SOURCE OF THE PROBLEM WAS EXTREMELY... PROBLEMATIC, AFTER ALL.

GOOD WORK TODAY.

THOUGH THAT'S MERELY MY OPINION.
NAGATO-SAN'S MEMBER-SHIP IN THE SOS BRIGADE HAS BECOME A TOTAL NECES-SITY.

.....
WHAT'RE YOU TRYING TO SAY?

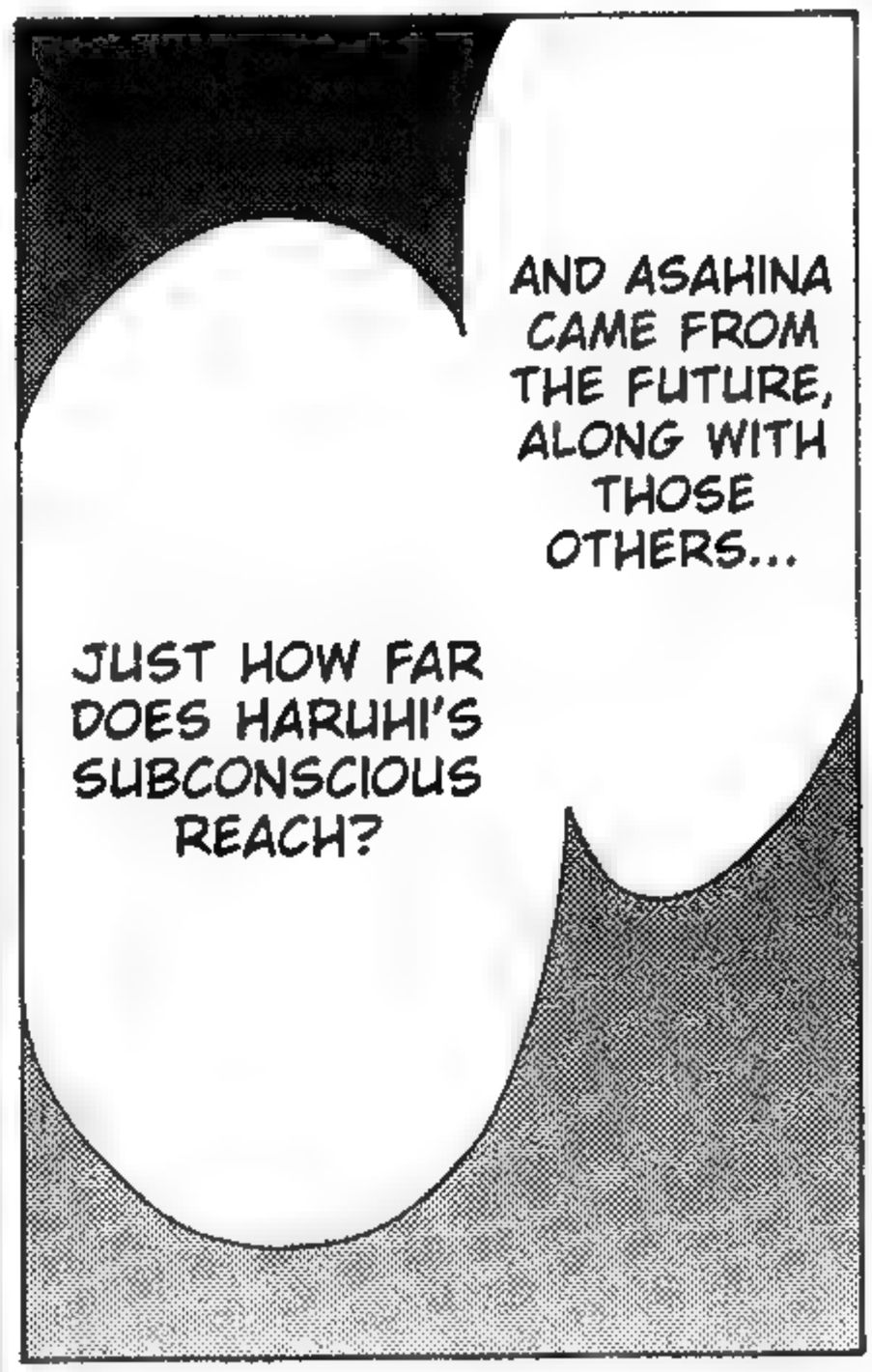
NOT REALLY.
HUH.
YOU SEEM TO BE THE ONE WITH SOMETHING YOU WANT TO SAY.

...WHAT'S THE REASON THEY KEEP COMING TO EARTH?

TO PUT IT BLUNTLY ...
...THE CAVE CRICKET AND THE THING WE JUST DEALT WITH...

BUT THAT WAS AN ACTIVE, DELIBERATE RESPONSE.
WHICH CAUSED THE DATA OVERMIND TO SEND NAGATO HERE.
HARUHI CREATED THAT DATA EXPLOSION.

IS THAT THE ANSWER?
HARU-HI.

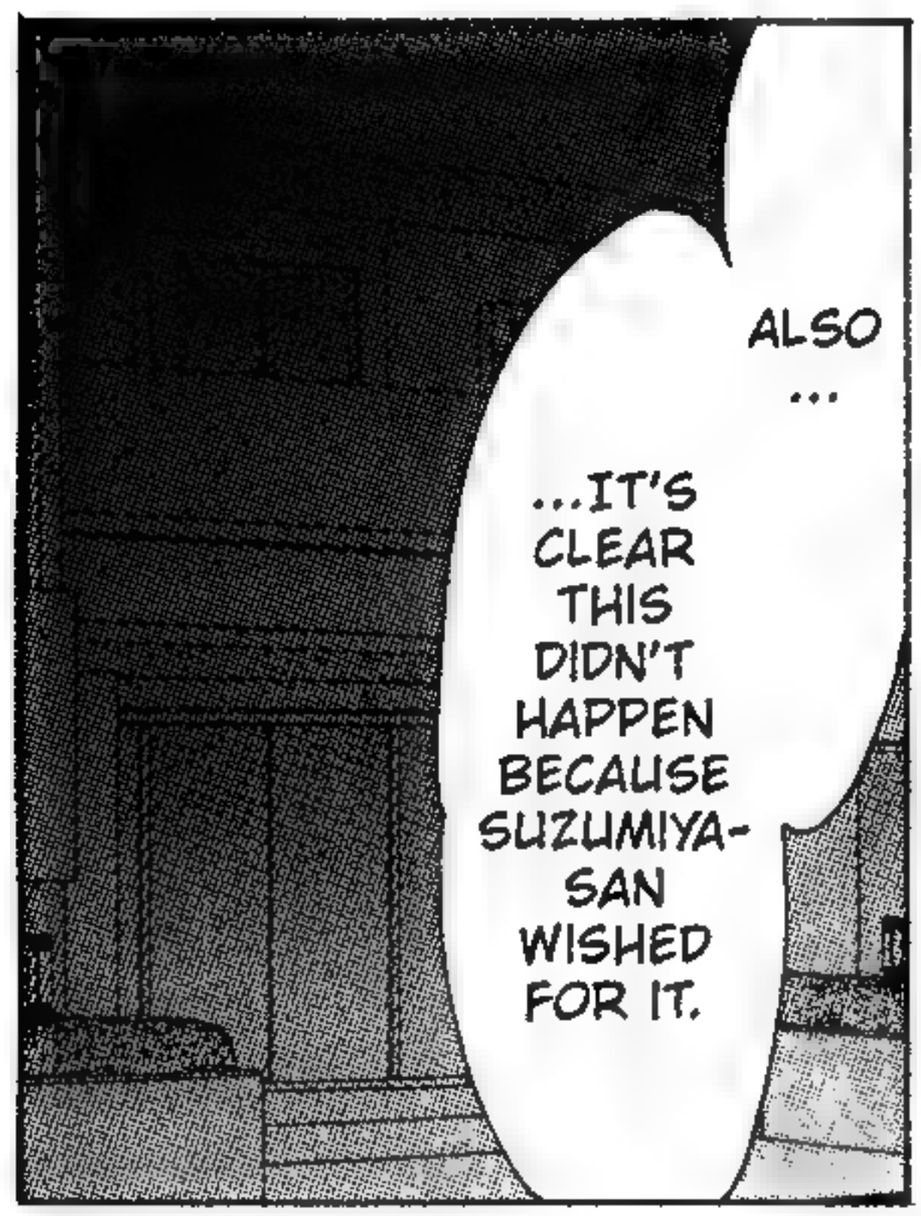

AND ASAHINA CAME FROM THE FUTURE, ALONG WITH THOSE OTHERS...
JUST HOW FAR DOES HARUHI'S SUBCONSCIOUS REACH?

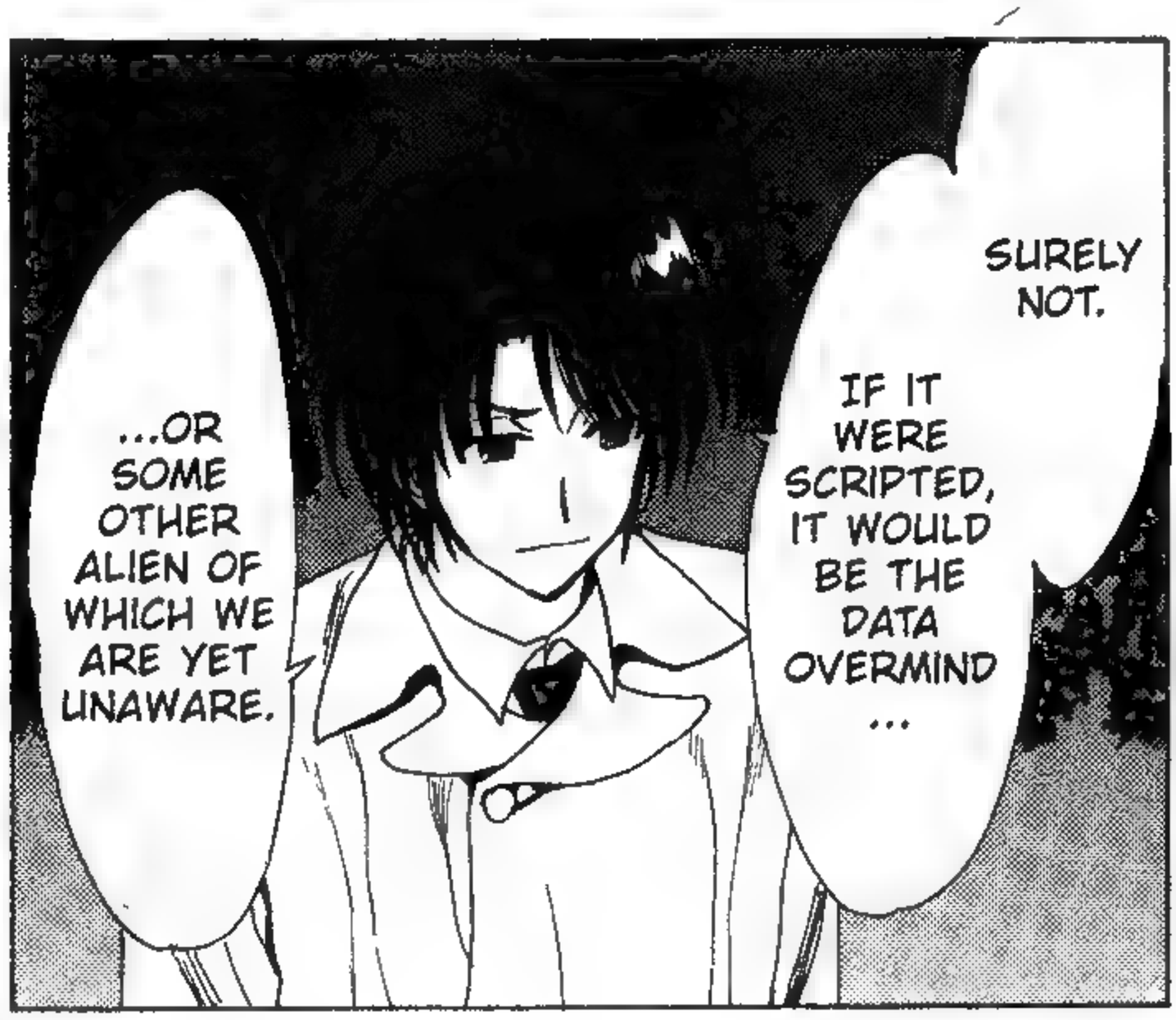
IT'S AN ASTRO-NOMICALLY TINY PROBA-BILITY.
THIS COSMIC LIFE-FORM FALLING HERE, IN OUR TOWN...

DO YOU THINK IT'S A COINCI-DENCE?

ARE YOU SAYING NAGATO SET IT ALL UP?
SO WHAT IF IT WASN'T A COIN-CIDENCE!

IT'S ASTRO-NOMICAL, ALL RIGHT!


ALSO ...
...IT'S CLEAR THIS DIDN'T HAPPEN BECAUSE SUZUMIYA-SAN WISHED FOR IT.


SURELY NOT.
IF IT WERE SCRIPTED, IT WOULD BE THE DATA OVERMIND ...
...OR SOME OTHER ALIEN OF WHICH WE ARE YET UNAWARE.

THERE'S SOMETHING OUT THERE THAT FINDS A STABLE SUZUMIYA-SAN TO BE LESS INTERESTING.

I TOLD YOU BEFORE, DIDN'T I?

SUZUMIYA-SAN'S PSYCHE IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE STABLE.

AND THAT'S THE PROBLEM.

BE IT A DATA-FLARE ...

... A TIME-QUAKE...

...OR SOME-THING ELSE.

THERE'S SOMETHING THAT WANTS TO PROVOKE SUZUMIYA-SAN'S POWER INTO ACTION.

SO...

THIS INCIDENT MAY BE ONLY AN OMEN OF SOMETHING ELSE.

TCH...
...THEY ARE NOT LIMITED TO HUMANOID INTERFACES TO THE DATA OVERMIND.
YOU MUST KNOW.
THESE ALIENS ...
THE TIMING OF THESE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL VISITS CANNOT BE EXPLAINED BY COINCIDENCE.

IF YOU WANT TO CALL NAGATO A "HUMANOID INTERFACE," FINE!
KOI-ZUMI.
I'M NOT GOING ALONG WITH THIS PESSIMISM OF YOURS!

THEY KEEP ME AWARE OF MANY THINGS.
THE AGENCY HAS A VARIETY OF INFOR-MATION SOURCES.

BUT ARE YOU SAYING YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT OTHER ALIENS?

WELL, WE DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT NAGATO.

THERE'S NO ENTITY ANYWHERE WITH MORE WILL-POWER THAN HER.

I HAVE A FEELING THEY'LL BE TRYING SOMETHING AGAIN SOON.

BUT I'LL LEAVE THOSE TO NAGATO-SAN.

MY ROLE IS TO WORK AGAINST THE AGENCY'S RIVAL ORGANIZA-TION.

I'LL SAY IT AS MANY TIMES AS I HAVE TO.

I WON'T LET YOU FORGET THE PROMISE YOU MADE ON THAT SNOWY MOUN-TAIN.

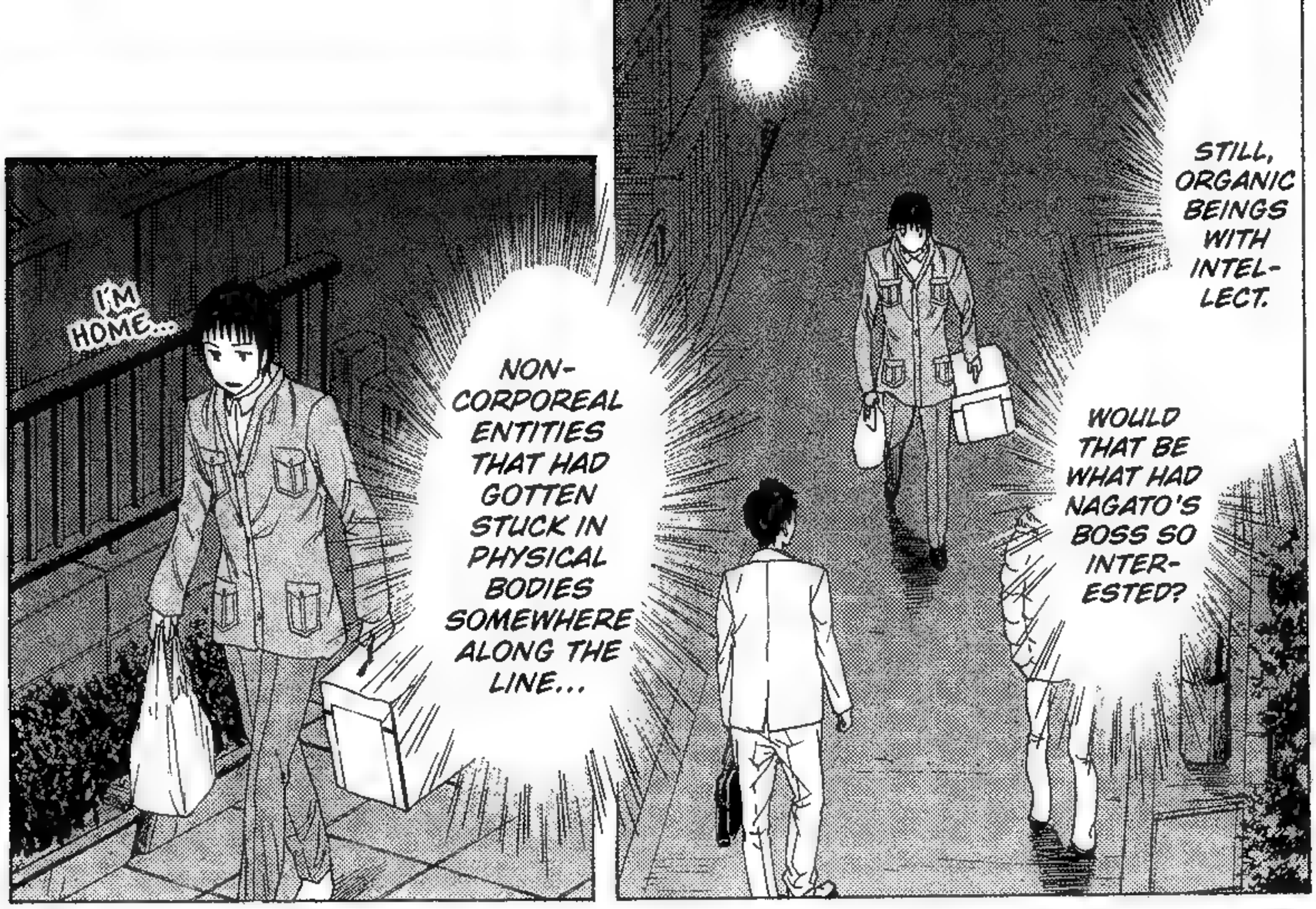
AND IF IT COMES DOWN TO IT, YOU'LL BE RUNNING AROUND WITH ME TOO.

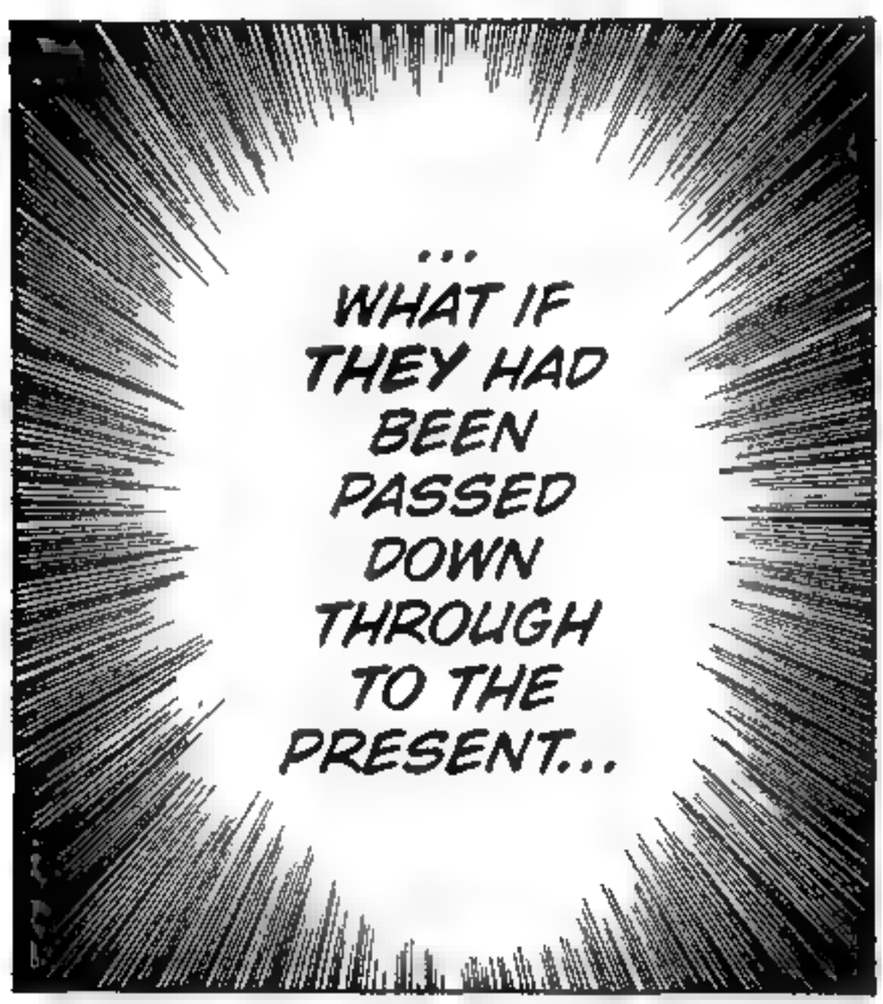
WHEN THE TIME COMES.

I RE-MEMBER IT, OF COURSE.

AND EVEN IF I DID FORGET, I'M QUITE CERTAIN YOU'D REMIND ME, WOULDN'T YOU?

WHAT IF MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO...
... A DATA LIFE FORM APPEARED THAT CHOSE NOT DOGS, BUT HUMANITY ...
DO GHOSTS EXIST?
THAT'S CLASSIFIED.
I'M PROBABLY JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS, THOUGH.
THEREBY BESTOWING RUDIMENTARY CONSCIOUSNESS ON EARLY HUMANS.
THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT WOULD ENGAGE IN SYMBIOSIS WITH US WASN'T ZERO.


I'M HOME...
NON-CORPOREAL ENTITIES THAT HAD GOTTEN STUCK IN PHYSICAL BODIES SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE...
STILL, ORGANIC BEINGS WITH INTEL-LECT.
WOULD THAT BE WHAT HAD NAGATO'S BOSS SO INTER-ESTED?


...
WHAT IF THEY HAD BEEN PASSED DOWN THROUGH TO THE PRESENT...

JUST AS MITO-CHONDRIA HAD ONCE BEEN INDE-PENDENT ORGANISMS ...
WELCOME HOME!
WHERE'D YOU TAKE SHAMI?

CREAM PUFFS?
HERE, BROUGHT YOU A PRESENT.
SURE, WHAT-EVER.
I SHOULD LEAVE THIS KIND OF SPECU-LATION TO KOIZUMI.

AS I RECALL, IT WAS JUST THE STORY OF A ROMANCE BETWEEN A BOY AND GIRL AS THEY GO FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE.

I HAD A BOOK THAT NAGATO HAD LOANED ME ABOUT A WEEK EARLIER.

SHE SHOULD BE A LIBRARIAN.

NAGATO SHOULDN'T GO INTO FORTUNE-TELLING OR VETERINARY WORK...

IN MANY WAYS, IT SUITS ME JUST FINE.

NYAA (MEOW)

KARI (SCRITCH) KARI KARI

...HUH?

TA (DASH)
NO WAY.
...ARE THEY LOOKING AT SOMETHING THAT WE CAN'T SEE...?
WHEN CATS STARE INTO SPACE...
...THE CONSCIOUSNESS IN MY HEAD DOESN'T BELONG TO ANYONE ELSE.
JUST LIKE I CAN'T BE ANYONE OTHER THAN WHO I AM...
RRRR
AND IF SOMEBODY WANTED IT BACK, WELL, TOUGH.
IT'S ALL MINE. ONLY MINE.

Why do you think J.J. and Mike caught that weird sickness in the first place?

I've been thinking about it...

MENU

HEY, KYON. I FORGOT SOMETHING IMPORTANT.

WHAT'S UP?

I BET IT WAS THERE ON THAT PATH WE WALKED UNTIL ABOUT A WEEK AGO.

MY GUESS IS THAT IT STILL HASN'T CUT ITS TIES WITH THE MORTAL WORLD.

IT'S PROBABLY TURNED INTO A WANDERING SPIRIT...

WHAT I THINK IS THAT THE TWO OF THEM REALLY DID SEE A GHOST, AND THE SHOCK MADE THEM SICK!

SO YOU'RE GONNA TRACK IT DOWN AT ITS SOURCE, HUH?

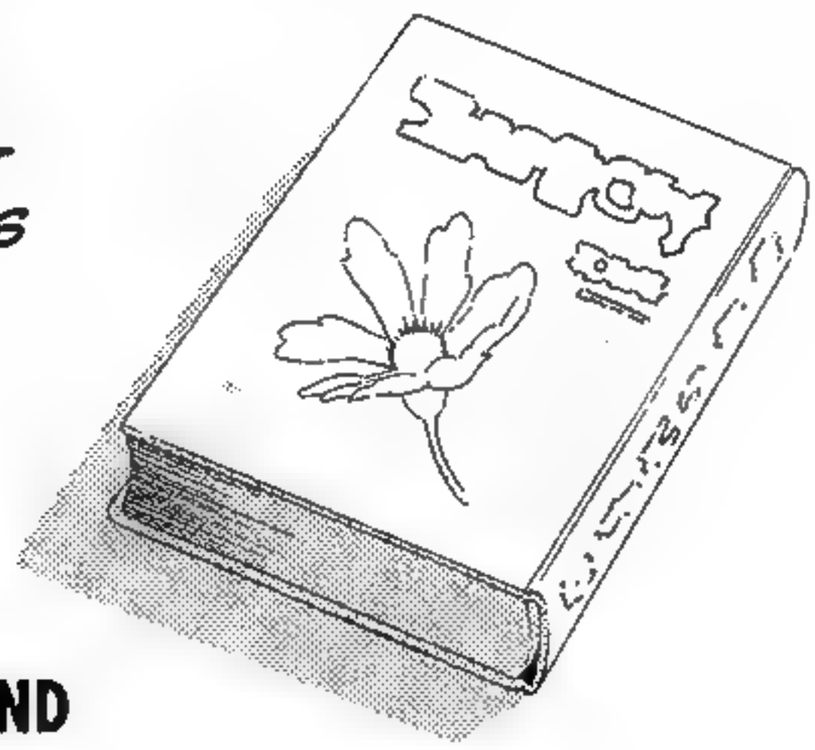
I SEE, O WISE BRIGADE CHIEF.

THIS TIME WE'RE DEFINITELY GONNA GET A PICTURE WITH THAT GHOST!

SO WE'RE HAVING AN ALL-HANDS MEETING TOMORROW!

NOT NOW, ANYWAY.

BUT I WASN'T JEALOUS OF IT.



THE REALITY PORTRAYED IN THAT BOOK WAS FAR MORE ORDINARY THAN THE ONE THAT SURROUNDED ME.

WANDERING SHADOW III : END

The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya

GUESS IT'S SPRING...

SHAMISEN HAD STOPPED CRAWLING INTO BED WITH ME...

...WHICH TELLS ME THAT THE REGION'S MOST LEGITIMATELY PRAISE-WORTHY MONTHS HAVE ARRIVED.

OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS, IT WAS THE ACTIVITY OF MY CAT SHAMISEN ...

...THAT MADE THE CHANGING SEASONS MOST EVIDENT TO ME.

IT IS WITHOUT A DOUBT SPRING.
AND A NEW SCHOOL YEAR HAS BEGUN.
BOTH A NEW ACADEMIC YEAR... AND A NEW YEAR FOR MY HEART AS WELL.

THIS IS OUR SECOND SPRING AS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.

THOUGH I AM UNSURE AS TO WHETHER I SHOULD SAY THAT IT HAS "FINALLY" ARRIVED...

...OR "ALREADY" ARRIVED.

GAYA ガヤ (CHATTER)

ガヤ GAYA

WAI (MERRY) ワイ

WAI ワイ

WAI ワイ

BUT FOR HUMANS, WHO CAN ONLY EXPERIENCE TIME SUBJECTIVELY, THEY ARE BUT A GUIDELINE.

A CLOCK'S HANDS TEACH US ABOUT OBJECTIVITY.

THE FORCE OF HABIT IS POW-ERFUL INDEED.

OF COURSE, HUMANS ARE ADAPT-ABLE CREA-TURES.

THEY CAN ADAPT TO MOST ENVIRON-MENTS.

WHAT'S MORE IMPORTANT IS WHAT ONE THOUGHT AND DID...

...WITHIN A GIVEN SPAN OF TIME.

BUT THERE MIGHT BE A DRAW-BACK TO THAT.

IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO ADAPT TO SUDDEN, UNFORE-SEEN CHANGES.

I'VE BEEN SLOW IN EX-PLAIN-ING THE CUR-RENT CIRCUM-STAN-CES.

...SO HERE'S A QUICK SUM-MARY.

THIS WAS EXACTLY WHAT WAS HAPPENING HERE AND NOW IN THE COURTYARD.

SCHOOL CLUBS— ESPECIALLY THE SMALLER, WEIRDER ONES— MUST RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS AND EXPLAIN THEIR ACTIVITIES.

WAI (CHATTER)

WAI

WAI

SIGN: LITERATURE CLUB

...BUT ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE SOS BRIGADE HAD MOST AUSPICIOUSLY MADE IT TO THEIR NEXT YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL.

WHOOPS, I SUPPOSE IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING...

BUT...

AND THAT WAS FINE, SO FAR AS IT WENT.

IN OTHER WORDS, WE WERE SOMEHOW SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS ...

...I'D WOUND UP IN THE SAME CLASS AS HARUHI AGAIN.

BY SOME COSMIC MIS-TAKE...

NOT ONLY WERE TANIGUCHI AND KUNIKIDA STILL IN MY CLASS, IT WAS EVEN THE SAME HOME-ROOM TEACHER.

FOR ONCE, I AGREED WITH HER.

WHAT'S THIS? THERE'S PRACTICALLY NO CHANGE FROM LAST YEAR!

FINE, WHATEVER.

HMM.

I DO KNOW OF ONE GIRL WHO COULD MAKE COINCI-DENCE INTO INEVITA-BILITY.

AT THE VERY LEAST, THE AGENCY HAS TAKEN A HANDS-OFF APPROACH.

NO.

IT IS A COINCI-DENCE.

ARE YOU GUYS BEHIND THIS?

IT'S PRETTY MUCH THE SAME AS BEFORE.

THAT DAY, HARUHI'S SELF-INTRODUCTION HAD STUNNED ALL OF CLASS FIVE.

OF THE BEINGS SHE MENTIONED IN HER SPEECH, ONE HAS YET TO MAKE AN APPEARANCE...

SLIDERS?

WAI (CHATTER)

WAI

WAI

WHAT I'M WORRIED ABOUT IS SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY.

WHO LURKS AMONG THOSE NEW FRESHMEN?

SIGN: LITERATURE CLUB

WAI

WAI

WHAT DOES SHE MEAN BY THAT?

HEY, YOU THERE.

WAI

IF YOU SEE ANYBODY WITH POTENTIAL, SECURE THEM IMMEDIATELY!

WAI

WAI

I HAVE NO DESIRE FOR ONE TO SHOW UP.

BUT SHE MIGHT VERY WELL BE FEELING THEIR ABSENCE.

WAI

文芸部

YOUR SPEECH DURING THE OPENING ASSEMBLY WAS TOO LONG, PAL.

IT HASN'T BEEN LONG ENOUGH.

YOUR LEADER DOES NOT SEEM TO BE HERE.

IT HAS BEEN A WHILE.

ZAZA (MARCH)

I SUSPECTED THAT YOU MIGHT BE PLANNING SOMETHING QUITE BEYOND MY IMAGINATION.

GAYA (CLAMOR)

GAYA

GAYA

GAYA

GAYA

GAYA

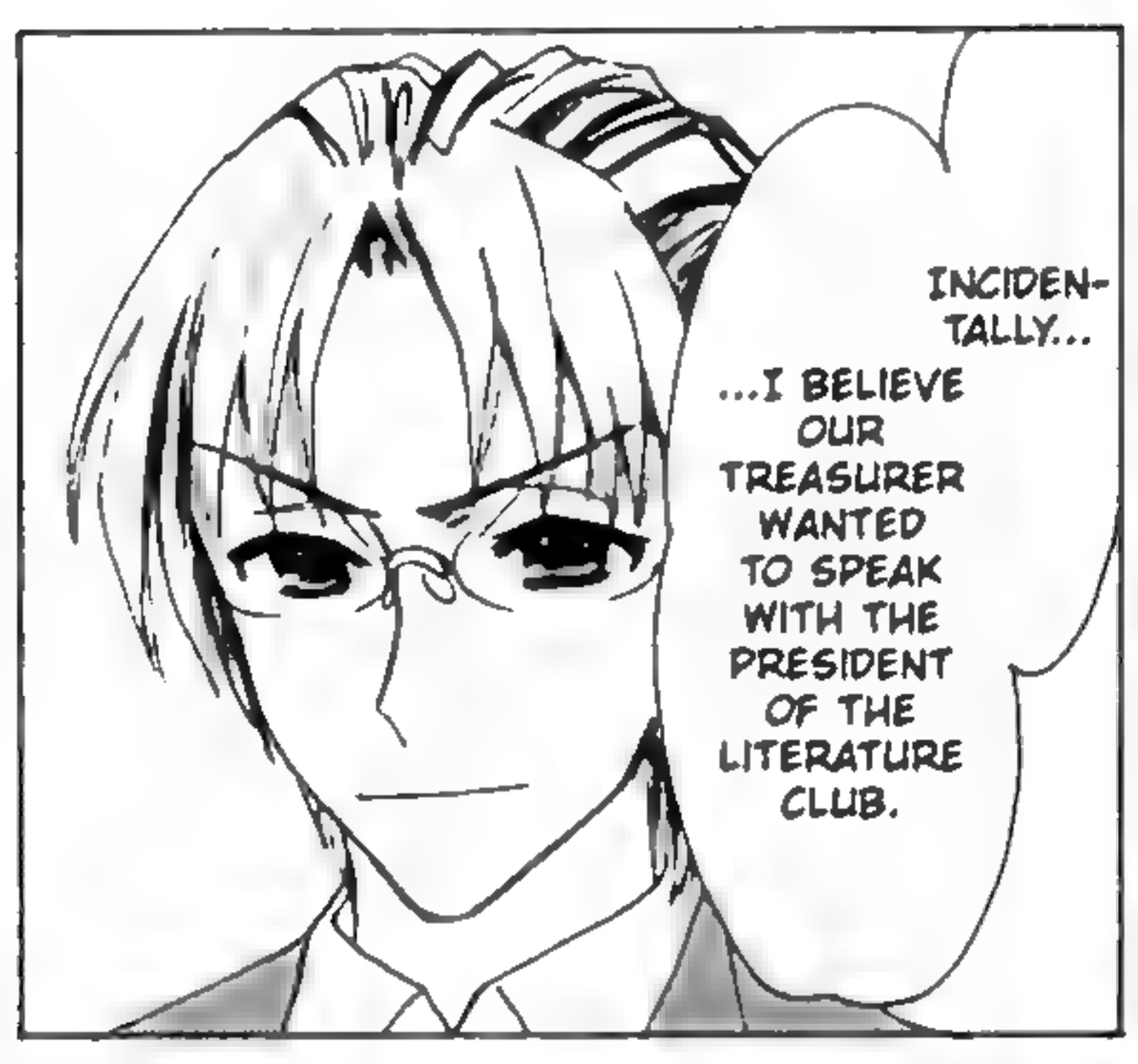
GO ON AHEAD TO THE PLAYING FIELD.

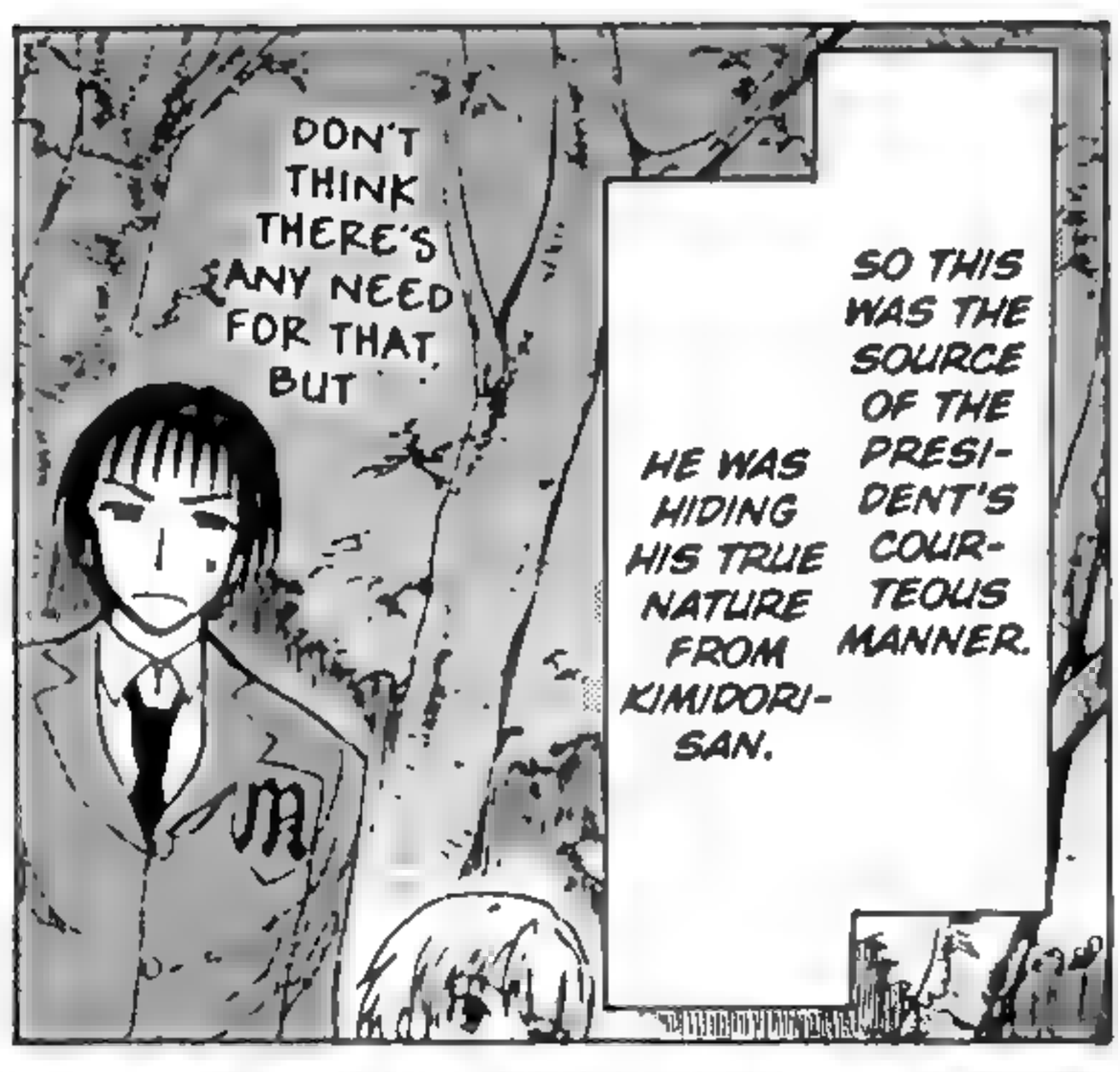
SU (SHF)

KIMI-DORI-KUN.

BUT I AM FIN-ISHED HERE.

UNDER-STOOD.

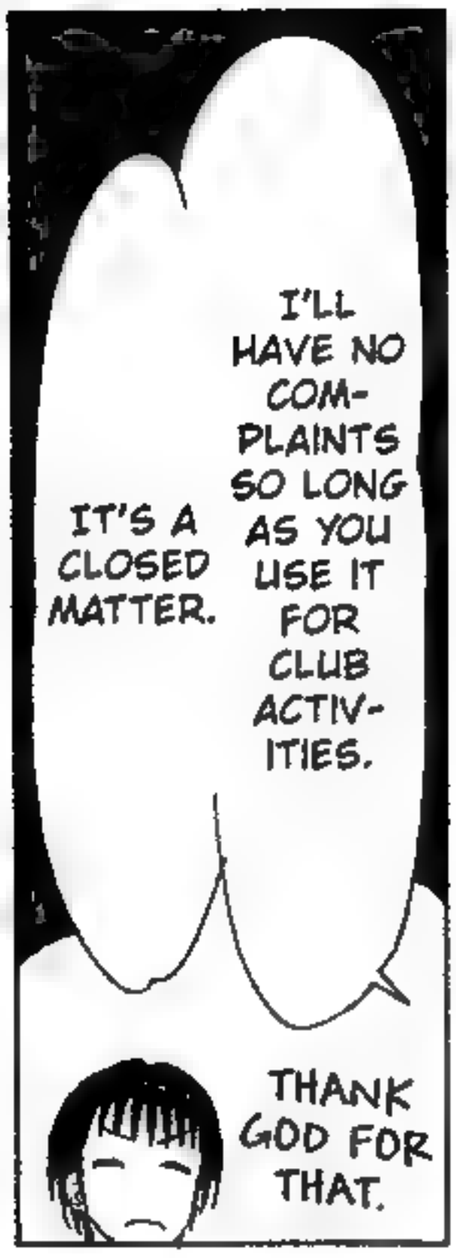

INCIDENTALLY...
...I BELIEVE OUR TREASURER WANTED TO SPEAK WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE LITERATURE CLUB.


DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY NEED FOR THAT, BUT
SO THIS WAS THE SOURCE OF THE PRESIDENT'S COURTEOUS MANNER.
HE WAS HIDING HIS TRUE NATURE FROM KIMIDORI-SAN.

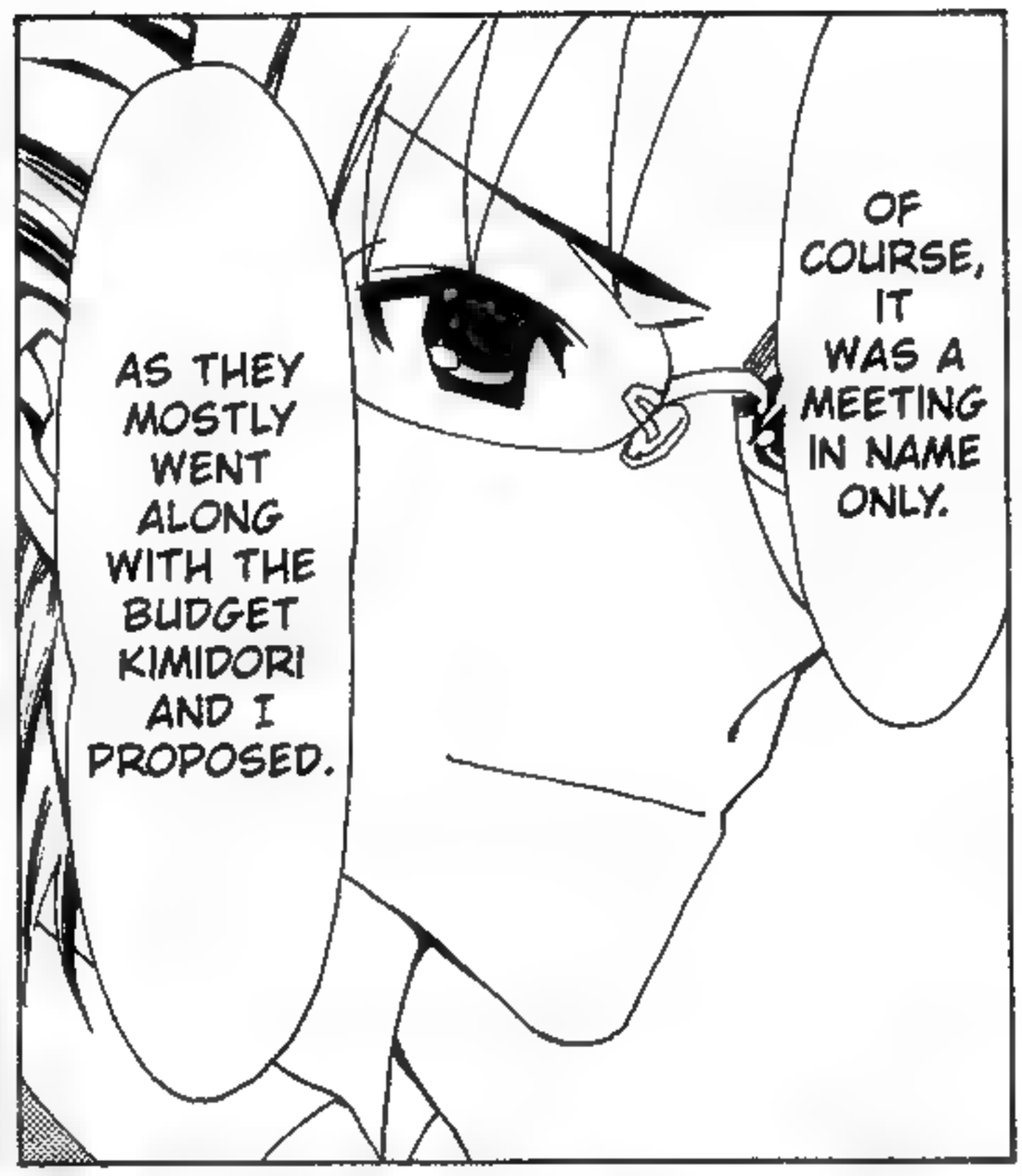
I'D MANAGED TO STOP HARUHI FROM CRASHING IT.
WHICH COULD'VE TURNED INTO A DISASTER.
HE WAS TALKING ABOUT THE CLUB BUDGET MEETING THAT HAD HAPPENED BEFORE SPRING BREAK.

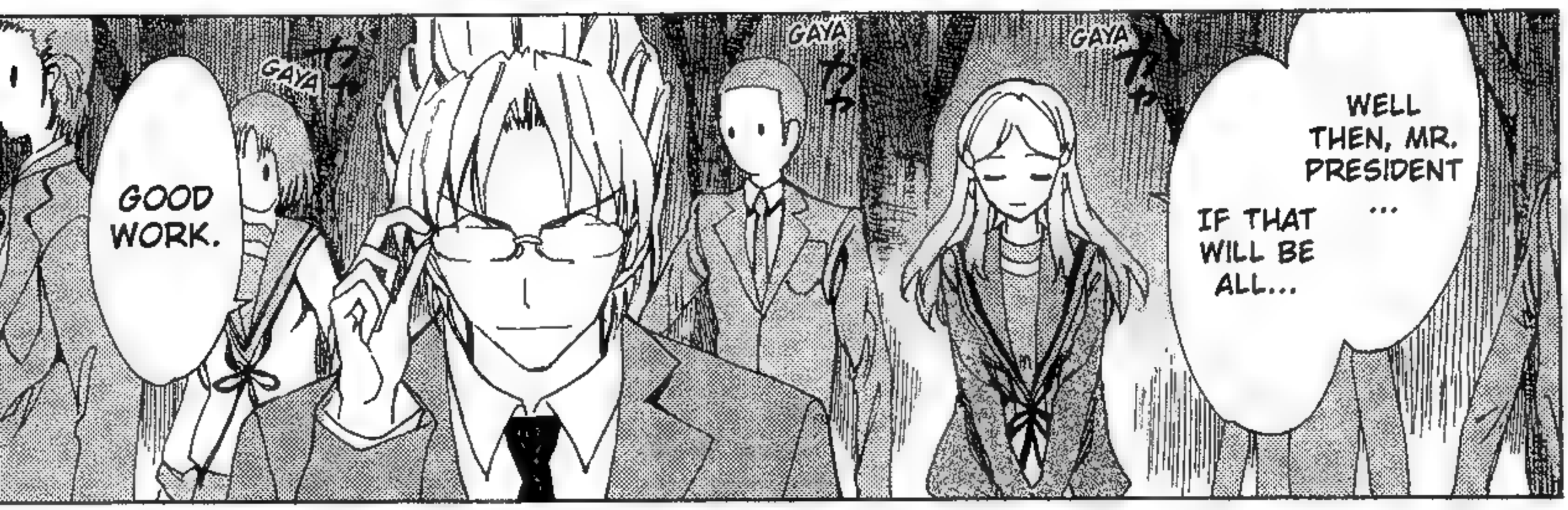
APPARENTLY, SHE'D JUST SAT THERE QUIETLY.
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT METHOD SHE USED.
STARING AT THE TREASURER.

WITH AN EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD BUDGET.
NAGATO HAD RETURNED FROM IT ABOUT AN HOUR LATER.


IT'S A CLOSED MATTER.
I'LL HAVE NO COMPLAINTS SO LONG AS YOU USE IT FOR CLUB ACTIVITIES.
THANK GOD FOR THAT.

GAYA
GAYA
BUT I WON'T ARGUE WITH IT NOW.
THE LITERATURE CLUB WAS THE ONLY IRREGULARITY.


AS THEY MOSTLY WENT ALONG WITH THE BUDGET KIMIDORI AND I PROPOSED.
OF COURSE, IT WAS A MEETING IN NAME ONLY.


GOOD WORK.
GAYA
GAYA
GAYA
WELL THEN, MR. PRESIDENT ...
IF THAT WILL BE ALL...

INCIDENTALLY ...
...THERE HAD BEEN NOT A SINGLE MOMENT OF EYE CONTACT BETWEEN NAGATO AND KIMIDORI.
PERHAPS THEY WERE COMMUNICATING WITHOUT WORDS.

UNTIL A MOMENT EARLIER, IT HAD FELT LIKE SHE WASN'T THERE AT ALL.
THAT WAS HOW SUDDEN HER APPEARANCE SEEMED.

I ASSUMED THAT STUDENT COUNCIL WORK WOULD BE NOTHING BUT A PAIN, BUT...

...IT'S ACTUALLY PRETTY FUN.

DON'T WORRY, KOIZUMI. I'VE GOT IT COVERED.

HE TURNS INTO A CORPSE.

AN ARCHAEO-LOGIST RAIDING A TOMB DOESN'T TURN INTO A MUMMY.

HEY, HEY! YOU THERE!

BOX: ORANGES

...KEEPING A LEASH ON THAT INSANE GIRL OF YOURS IS YOUR JOB.

GIRORI (GLARE)

JUST REMEM-BER...

WE'RE NOT DOING A SINGLE THING THAT THE STUDENT COUNCIL CAN COMPLAIN ABOUT!

WELL, TOO BAD FOR YOU!

温州みかん

BAN (BAM)

I LEAVE FOR ONE SECOND, AND GUESS WHO SHOWS UP?

YOU SHOULD BE THANKFUL!

SHE SAID IT AGAIN!

ドスン
SOSUN
(THUMP)

YOU SHOULD BE THANKFUL I WAS CONSIDERATE ENOUGH TO WEAR A CHEONGSAM INSTEAD!

I ORIGINALLY WANTED TO WEAR THE BUNNY GIRL OUTFIT.

HMPH!

IT'S NOT LIKE I'M GOING TO WEAR IT TO AND FROM SCHOOL.

I'D HOPED THAT THE STUDENT COUNCIL PRESIDENT WOULD LEARN TO RESPECT STUDENT INDEPENDENCE.

SHANARI
(SWISH)

しゃなりっ

DOES SHE WANT TO WEAR THE CHEONGSAM?

ほう?
HOU
(HAAH)

OH, UM, YES.

RIGHT, MIKURU-CHAN?

WEARING IT TO AND FROM SCHOOL IS...

文芸部
コチラ

IT'S A SIGN.

I SEE.

SO WHAT'S THAT SIGN FOR?

WAI ? (CHATTER)

I HOPE YOU UNDER-STAND THAT MUCH!

WAI ?

WE ARE HERE TO TO HELP YUKI.

WAI ?

WAI ?

SIGN: LITERATURE CLUB HERE

AT LAST WEEK'S CLUB INTRO-DUCTIONS ...

THAT MUCH WAS TRUE.

YUKI'D NEVER ACTIVELY SHOW OFF HER APPEAL.

WAI ?

WAI ?

NOT SURE I CAN TRUST YOU.

SIGN: NORTH HIGH CULTURE CLUB INTRODUCTIONS

YUKI NAGATO WAS A FORCE TO BE RECK-ONED WITH.

IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY STUDENTS WHO WERE INTERESTED IN JOINING THE LITERATURE CLUB, THAT HAD ERASED THEIR INTEREST.

北高部活動紹介

...SHE'D PRESENTED A TALK ENTITLED "A NEUROLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON INDIVIDUALS...

AND THE INSUFFICIENCY OF VERBAL DISCOURSE BETWEEN

STAY THERE AND BEHAVE YOURSELVES.

SO LONG AS YOU DON'T CAUSE ANY COMMOTION, I SUPPOSE IT IS FINE.

VERY WELL.

(INCIDENTALLY:)

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT THE SOS BRIGADE HAD BEEN GIVEN NO TIME TO MAKE A PRESENTATION.

HMPH. THAT IS ALL, THEN.

ZA (STEP)

BLEH!

THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!

...WILL YOU TURN THE CLUBROOM OVER TO THEM?

LASTLY ...

...IF YOU SUCCEED IN RECRUITING NEW LITERATURE CLUB MEMBERS ...

Yoo Hoo

BIRI (RIP)

EASY-PEASY!

SOS団

WELL, THAT WENT WELL!

OBVIOUSLY SHE'S NOT GONNA JUST STAND THERE QUIETLY.

DAN (THUNK)

I KNEW IT...

SIGN: SOS BRIGADE

C'MON, SET IT UP!

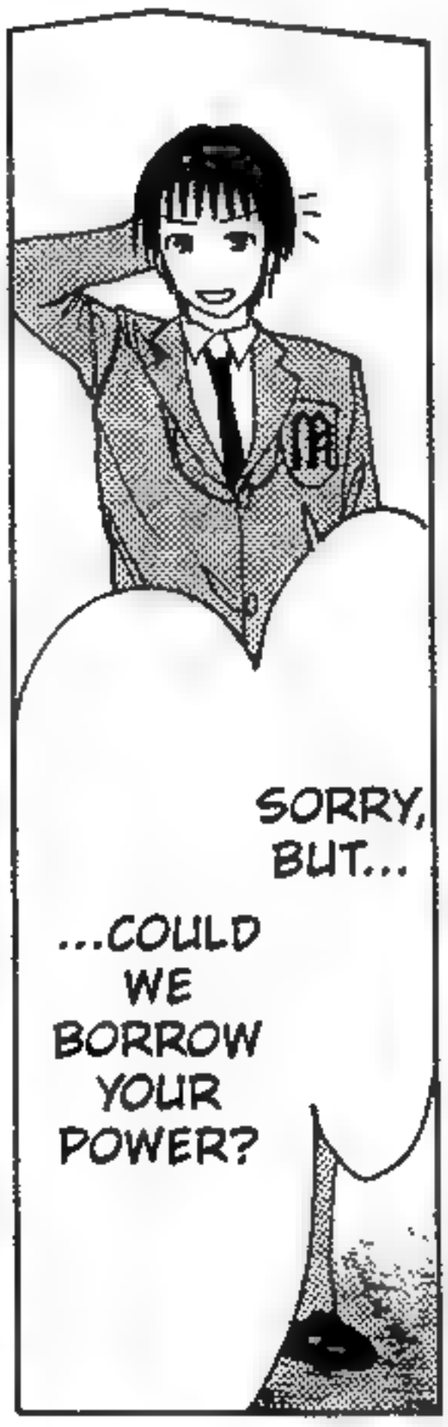
GREAT, HERE WE GO AGAIN...

SEE?

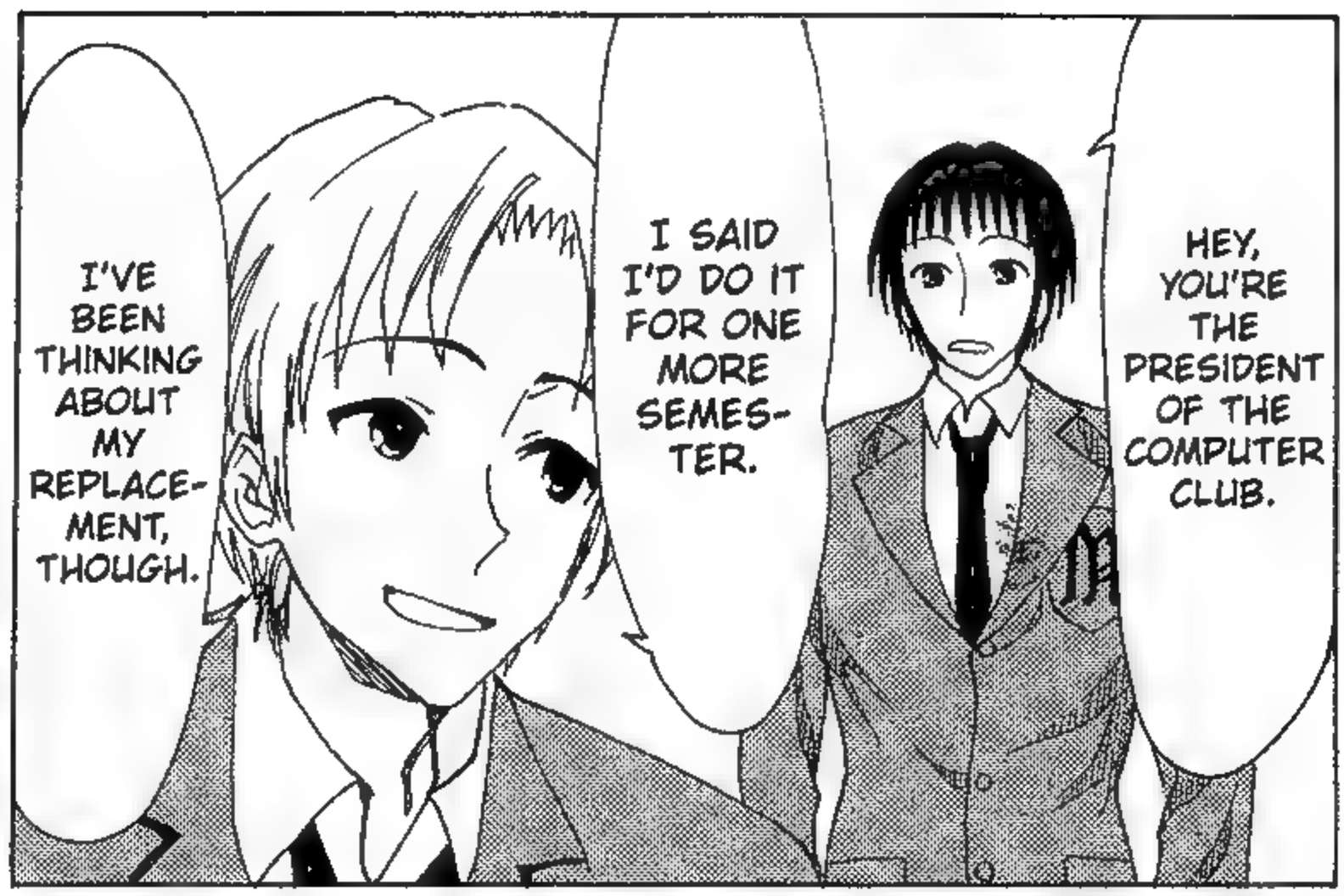
ゴ" GO

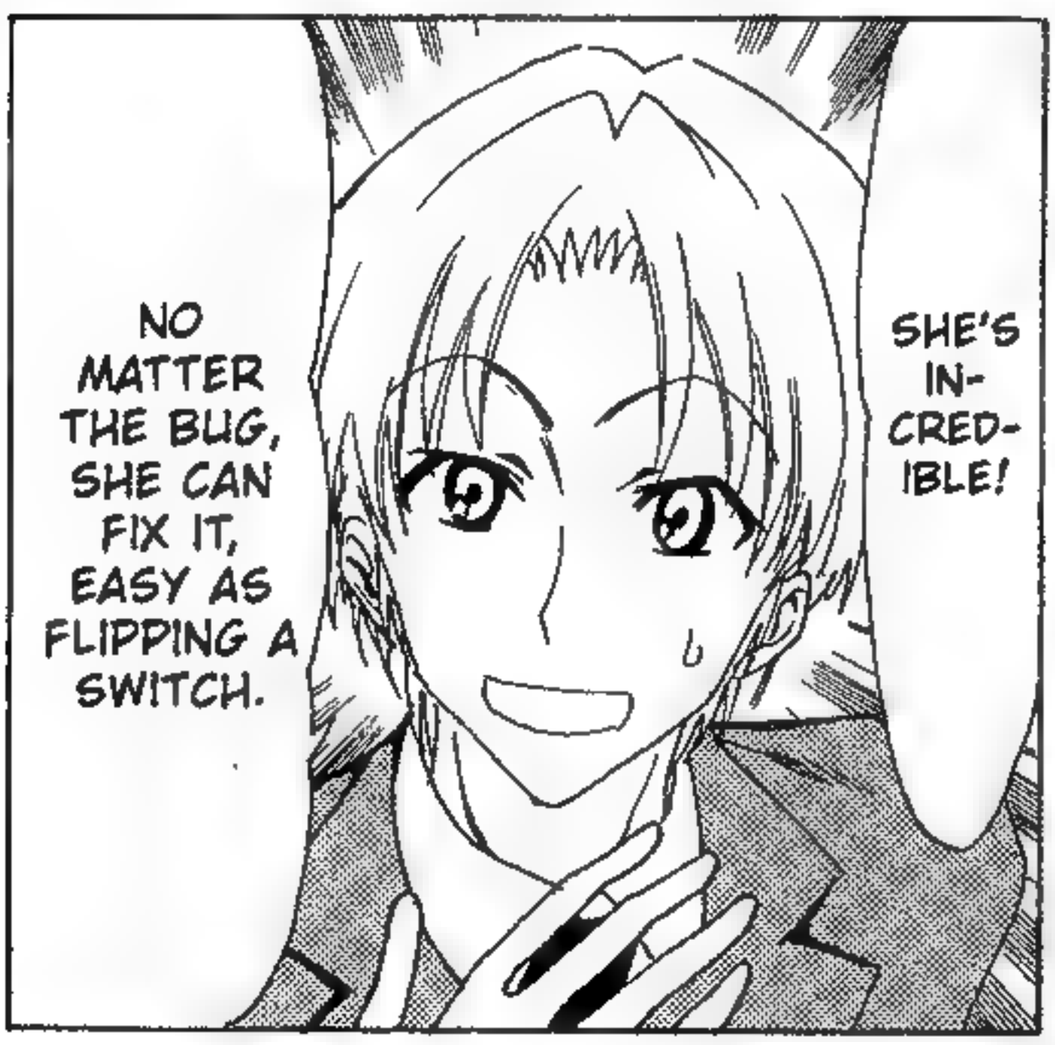
ゴトッ! GOTO (CLUNK)

ダッ TA (DASH)

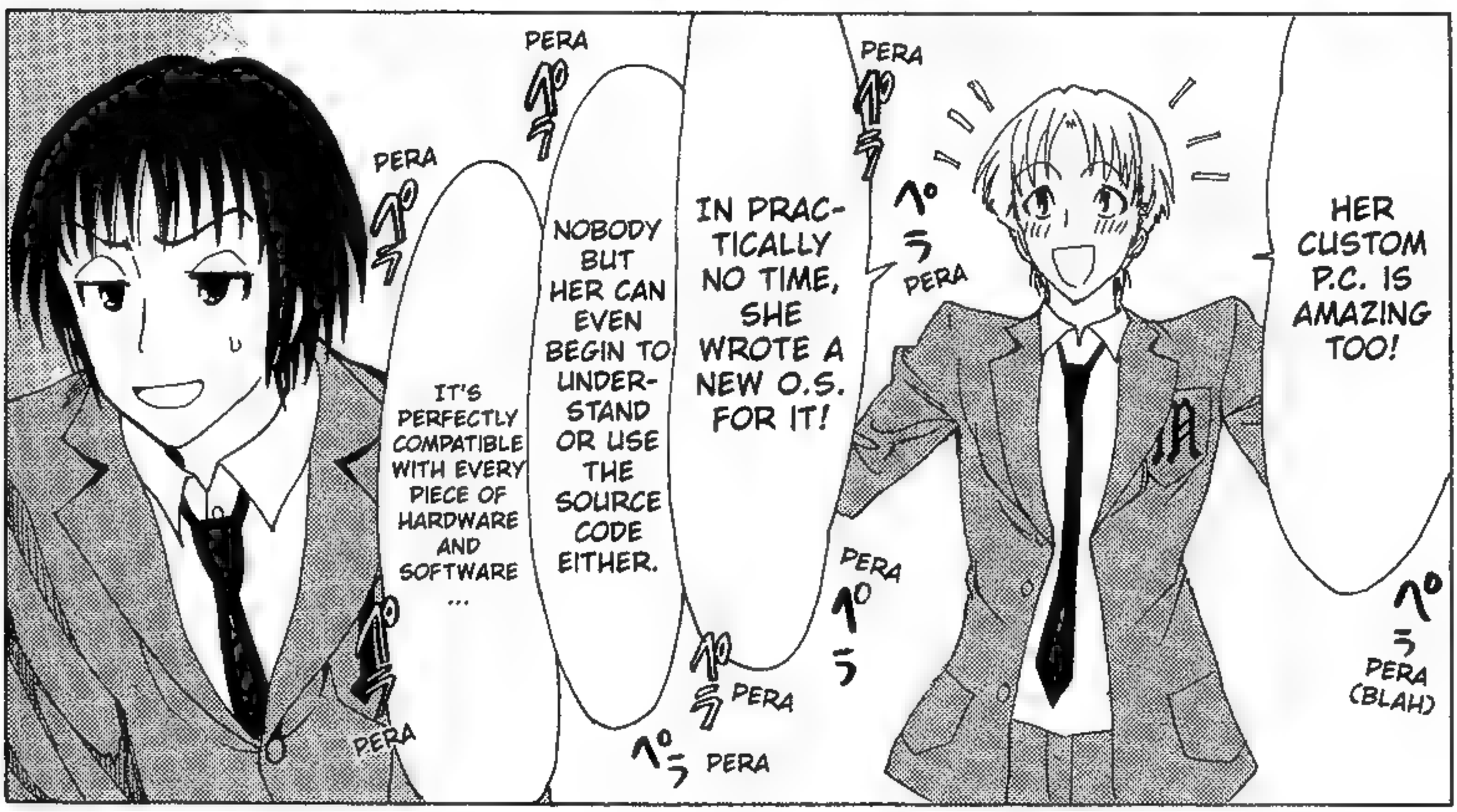


GOSOSO (SHUFFLE)
HEY, ACTU-ALLY...


I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT MY REPLACE-MENT, THOUGH.
I SAID I'D DO IT FOR ONE MORE SEMES-TER.
HEY, YOU'RE THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMPUTER CLUB.


NO MATTER THE BUG, SHE CAN FIX IT, EASY AS FLIPPING A SWITCH.
SHE'S IN-CRED-IBLE!

I'D LIKE TO GET NAGATO TO GET CON-CURRENT MEM-BERSHIP IN BOTH OUR CLUBS.


PERA
IT'S PERFECTLY COMPATIBLE WITH EVERY PIECE OF HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE ...
PERA
NOBODY BUT HER CAN EVEN BEGIN TO UNDER-STAND OR USE THE SOURCE CODE EITHER.
PERA
IN PRAC-TICALLY NO TIME, SHE WROTE A NEW O.S. FOR IT!
PERA
PERA
HER CUSTOM P.C. IS AMAZING TOO!
PERA (BLAH)

JUST FOR A SEMESTER, I GUESS.

HE'S STILL THE PRESIDENT?

ガヤ GAYA

ガヤ GAYA

ガヤ GAYA (CHATTER)

HURRY, KYON. GET THE VIDEO PLAYIN'!

ALL I COULD SAY WAS THAT WAS OUR NAGATO.

ガヤ GAYA

チラ CHIRA (GLANCE)

HE DOESN'T LOOK GOOD.

WHAT HIS PROBLEM?

...SO IF ANYBODY COMES OVER THINKING THAT, CHASE 'EM AWAY!

キュッ KYU (GRIP)

WE'RE NOT THE FILM CLUB...

MIKURU-CHAN AND I WILL FIGURE THIS OUT.

IF YOU SEE ANYBODY THAT LOOKS INTER-ESTING, WRITE THEIR NAME AND CLASS DOWN.

YOU GUYS JUST WAIT HERE.

THE SOS BRIGADE WAS SUMMONED TO ACTION NEARLY EVERY DAY OF THE BREAK, DISPATCHED BY HARUHI LIKE SO MANY TOMAHAWK MISSILES.

I IMAGINED SHE'D STARTED THINKING ABOUT DOING ANOTHER MOVIE AROUND THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT WITH THE DOG.

AND OF COURSE HARUHI WASN'T GOING TO QUIETLY WAIT AROUND.

BEFORE THE NEW TERM STARTED, THERE HAD OF COURSE BEEN A SPRING BREAK...

THE SEQUEL FOR HER SCHOOL FESTIVAL FILM, "THE ADVENTURES OF MIKURU ASAHINA EPISODE 00."

The Revenge of Yuki Nagato

Episode 00

AMID ALL THAT, THIS IS WHAT SHE WAS MOST DEVOTED TO.

DIRECTOR: HARUHI

PROD
SCENE 4 TAKE 2
DIRECTOR
CAMERA
DATE 10/10

THAT WAS THE PLAN, SO THAT'S WHY WE WOUND UP MAKING A TRAILER FOR A FILM THAT DIDN'T ACTUALLY EXIST.

SIMPLY TO ATTRACT NEW MEMBERS.

A PARADE OF SCENES RIPPED OFF FROM ALL OVER.

AND ITS CONTENTS ARE AMAZING.

DUM-DEE-DUM!

DUM-DEE-DUM!

THE SCENE WITH TSURUYA-SAN WAS THERE JUST BECAUSE WE'D SHOT FOOTAGE AT THE FLOWER-VIEWING PARTY.

MIKURU AND SHAMISEN SWITCH PERSON-ALITIES.

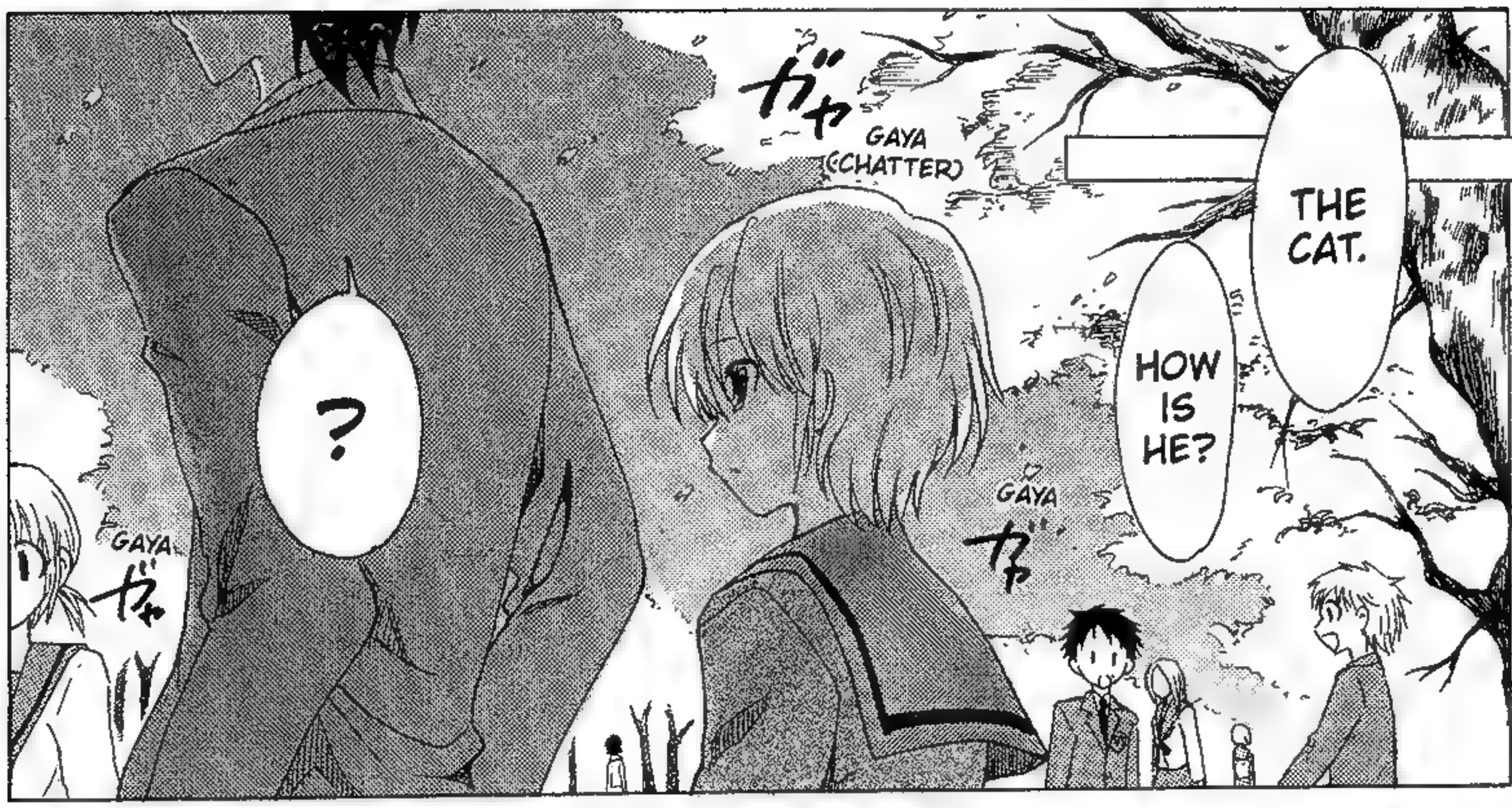
YUKI DECLARES WITHOUT ANY PARTICULAR CONTEXT, "I AM YOUR MOTHER."

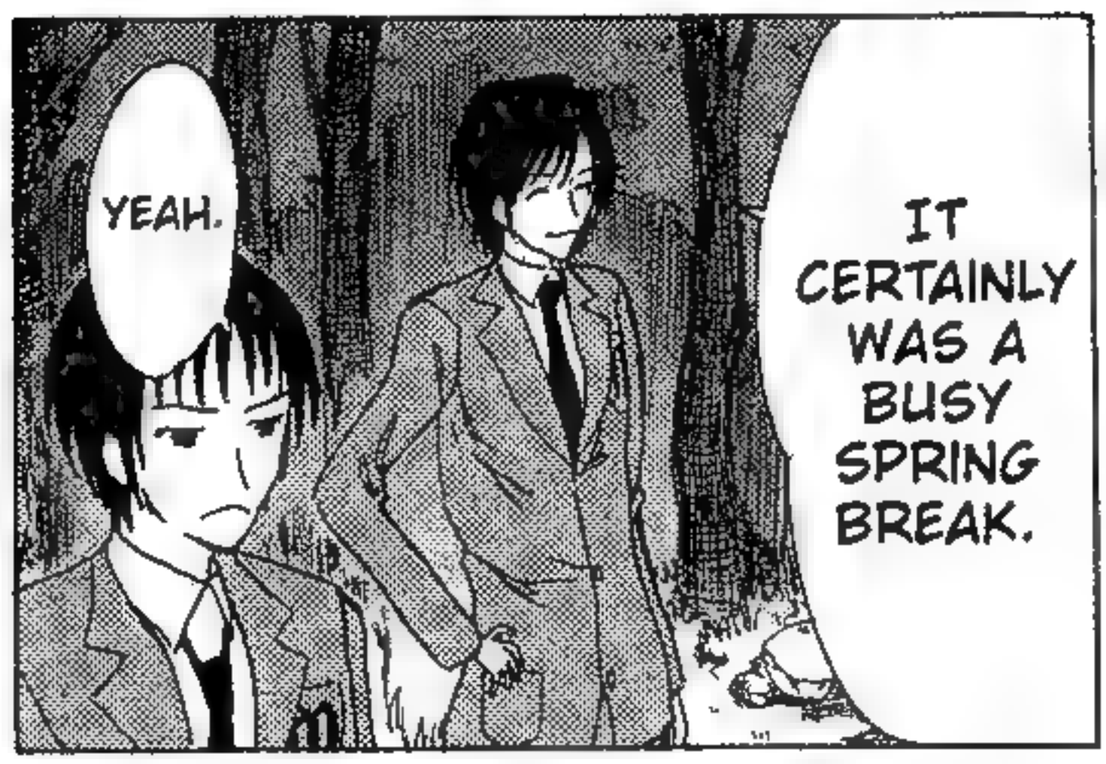
DON (DUM)

DON

DOOON

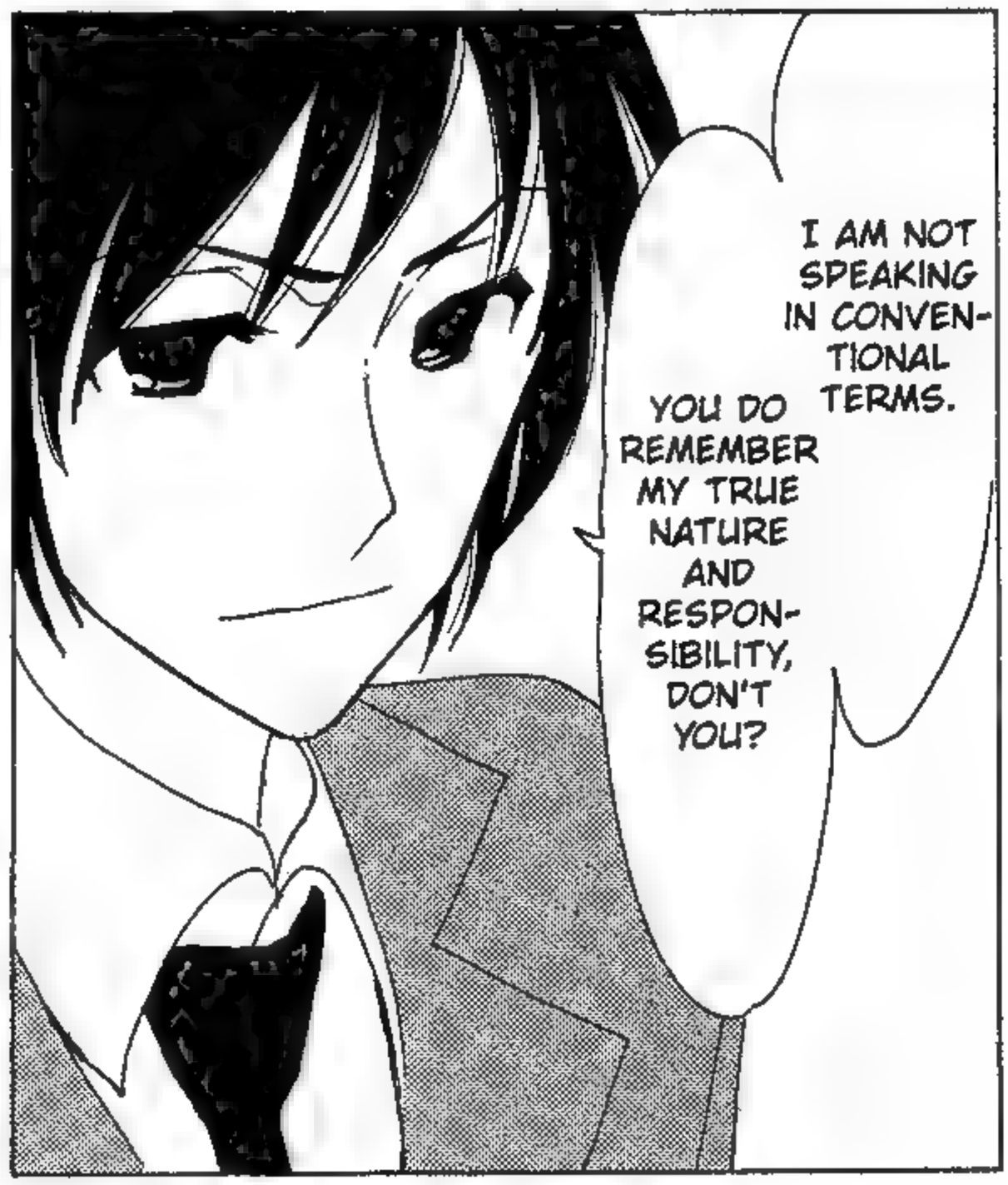
AT LEAST THE SCENES OF A WAITRESS-OUTFITTED ASAHINA-SAN JUMPING AROUND SUCCEEDED.
BUT ONLY AS AN ASAHINA-SAN MUSIC VIDEO.
YUKI WENT FLYING OFF INTO SPACE AT THE END OF THE LAST MOVIE, SO HOW IS SHE BACK ON EARTH?
I'LL THINK ABOUT THAT NEXT
AND NEW ENEMIES TOO!
WHICH MEANT SHE HADN'T THOUGHT ABOUT IT AT ALL.
BAAN (WHOOSH)


ガヤ
GAYA (CHATTER)
THE CAT.
HOW IS HE?
?
GAYA
ガヤ
GAYA
ガヤ


YEAH.
IT CERTAINLY WAS A BUSY SPRING BREAK.

I SEE.
HE'S DOING GREAT.
OH, SHAMI-SEN?

OH, THAT?
AND THE ABILITIES MY POWERS GIVE ME?


YOU DO REMEMBER MY TRUE NATURE AND RESPON-SIBILITY, DON'T YOU?
I AM NOT SPEAKING IN CONVEN-TIONAL TERMS.

CLOSED SPACE AND CELES-TIALS.

STARTING THE LAST DAY OF SPRING BREAK AND THROUGH TODAY...

RECENTLY, THE RATE OF INCIDENTS HAS BEEN RISING.

I HAVEN'T BEEN GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP.

THANKS TO THAT, I'VE BEEN ON A 24-HOUR ROTATION.

DIDN'T YOU SEE HARUHI JUST NOW?

SHE WAS TOTALLY HAPPY!

WAIT JUST A SEC-OND!

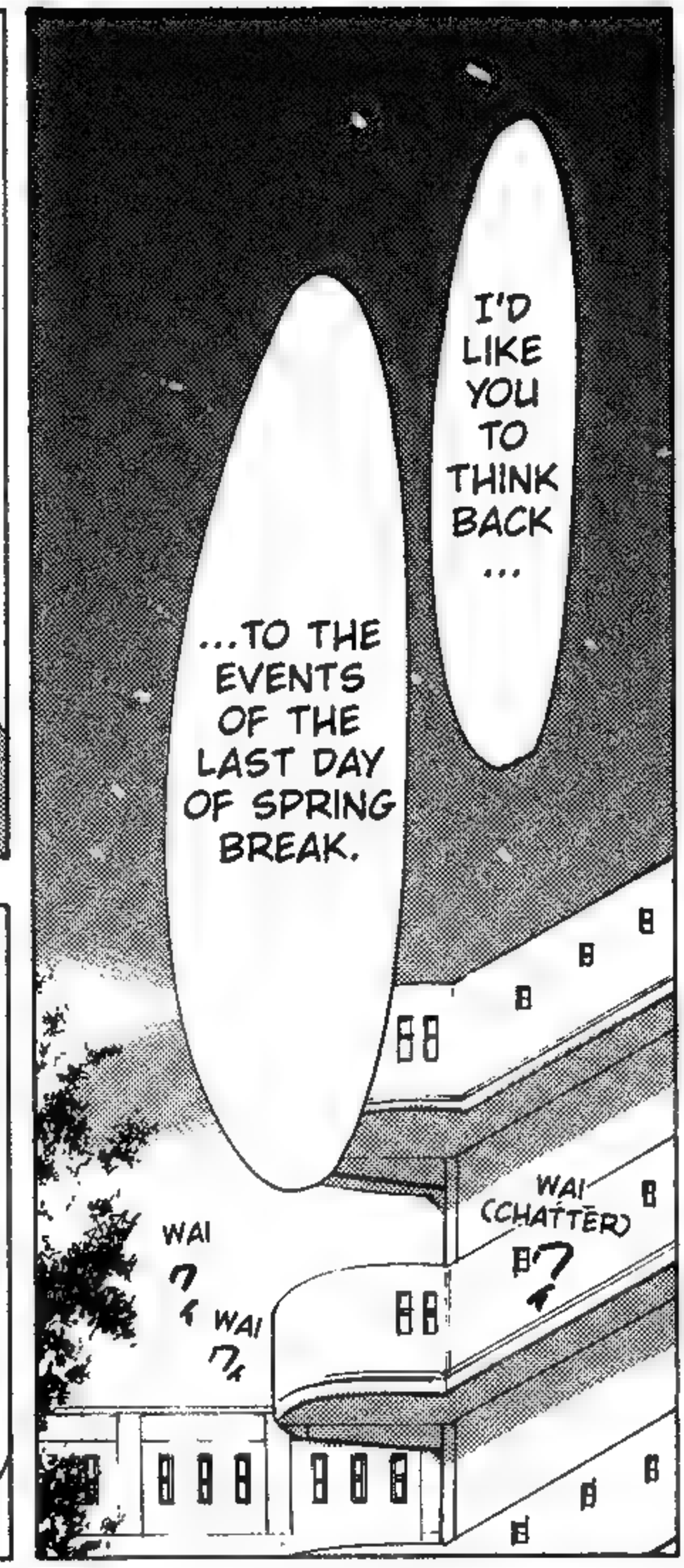
WAI

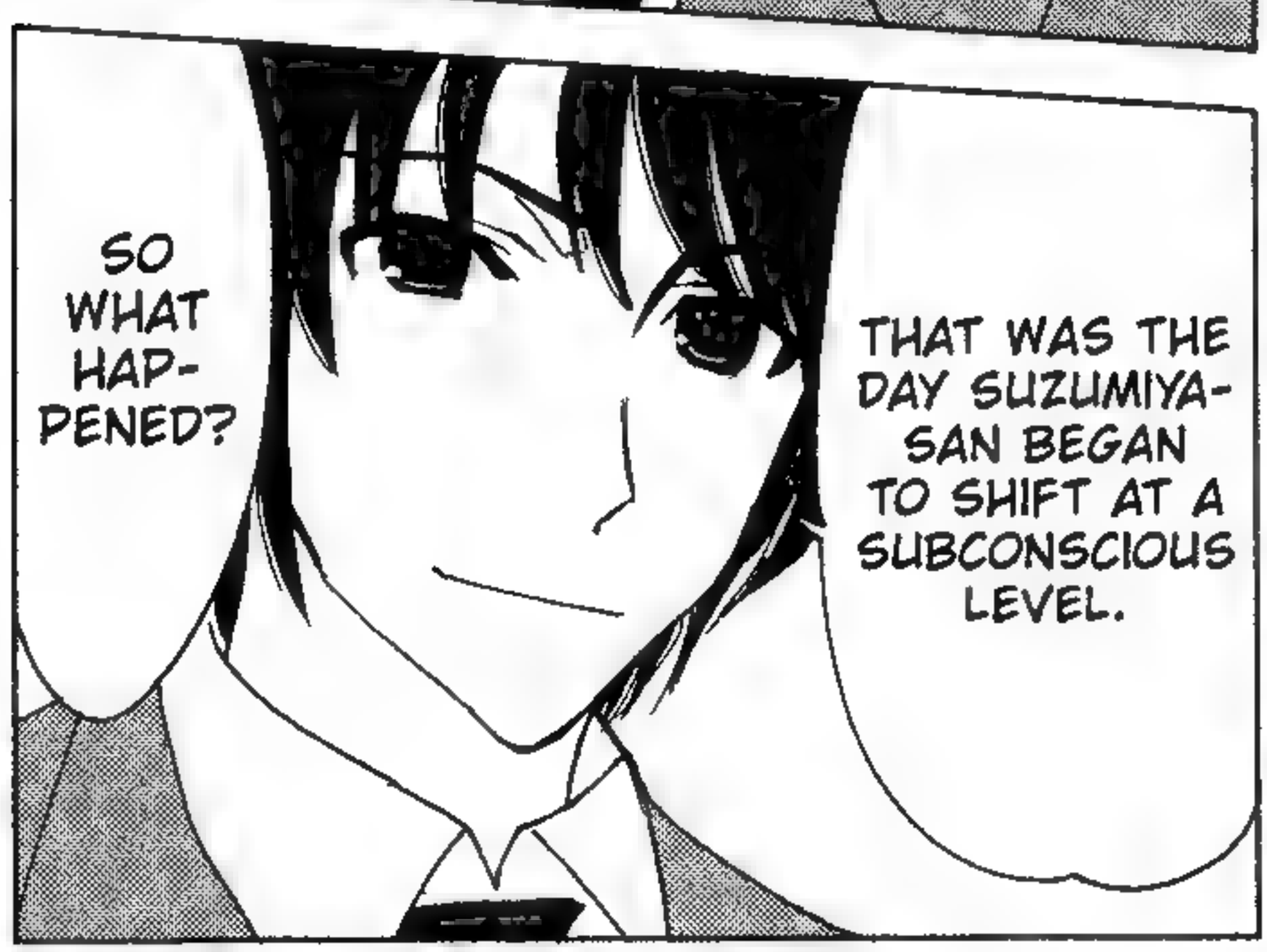
HEY, C'MON ...

WAI (CHATTER)

SUZUMIYA-SAN'S MENTAL STATE WAS SO STABLE RIGHT AFTER SHE STARTED THE SOS BRIGADE LAST YEAR, BUT NOW ...

SURELY IT MUST.
DOESN'T ANYTHING STICK OUT TO YOU?


I'D LIKE YOU TO THINK BACK ...
...TO THE EVENTS OF THE LAST DAY OF SPRING BREAK.
WAI
WAI
WAI (CHATTER)


SO WHAT HAP-PENED?
THAT WAS THE DAY SUZUMIYA-SAN BEGAN TO SHIFT AT A SUBCONSCIOUS LEVEL.

BE-FORE WE GOT ON THE TRAIN.
YOU'RE REALLY ANNOY-ING.
HARUHI SAID SHE WANTED TO GET IN ON IT, SO...
...WE TOOK A TRAIN OVER.

THAT'S THE DAY WE WENT TO THE FLEA MARKET, RIGHT?

MAYBE IT'S TIME TO DEAL WITH THE CLUTTER.

DON'T YOU THINK THERE'S TOO MUCH STUFF IN THIS ROOM?

PAPER: FLEA MARKET, EVERYONE WELCOME

WE CAN'T DO IT THIS TIME, BUT WE SHOULD DEFINITELY PARTICIPATE NEXT TIME!

IF WE TAKE AN EXPRESS TRAIN, WE CAN GET THERE IN FIFTEEN MINUTES.

PERA (FLIP)

SO I FOUND THIS!

PI (JAB)

WE'RE GOING TO CHECK OUT THE FLEA MARKET!

SO EVERYBODY MAKE SURE TO KEEP THE LAST DAY OF SPRING BREAK OPEN!

...SO THAT'S HOW WE MADE THE PLANS TO GO, ROUGHLY.
ISN'T THAT JUST GOING TO MEAN WE HAVE MORE STUFF?
WITH CLUB FUNDS!
AND IF WE SEE ANYTHING INTERESTING, WE'RE GONNA BUY IT!

I WAS STARTING TO WONDER IF IT HAD BEEN ERASED FROM YOUR MEMORY.
GAYA
GAYA
SO YOU'VE FINALLY MANAGED TO ARRIVE AT THAT POINT.
GAYA (CHATTER)

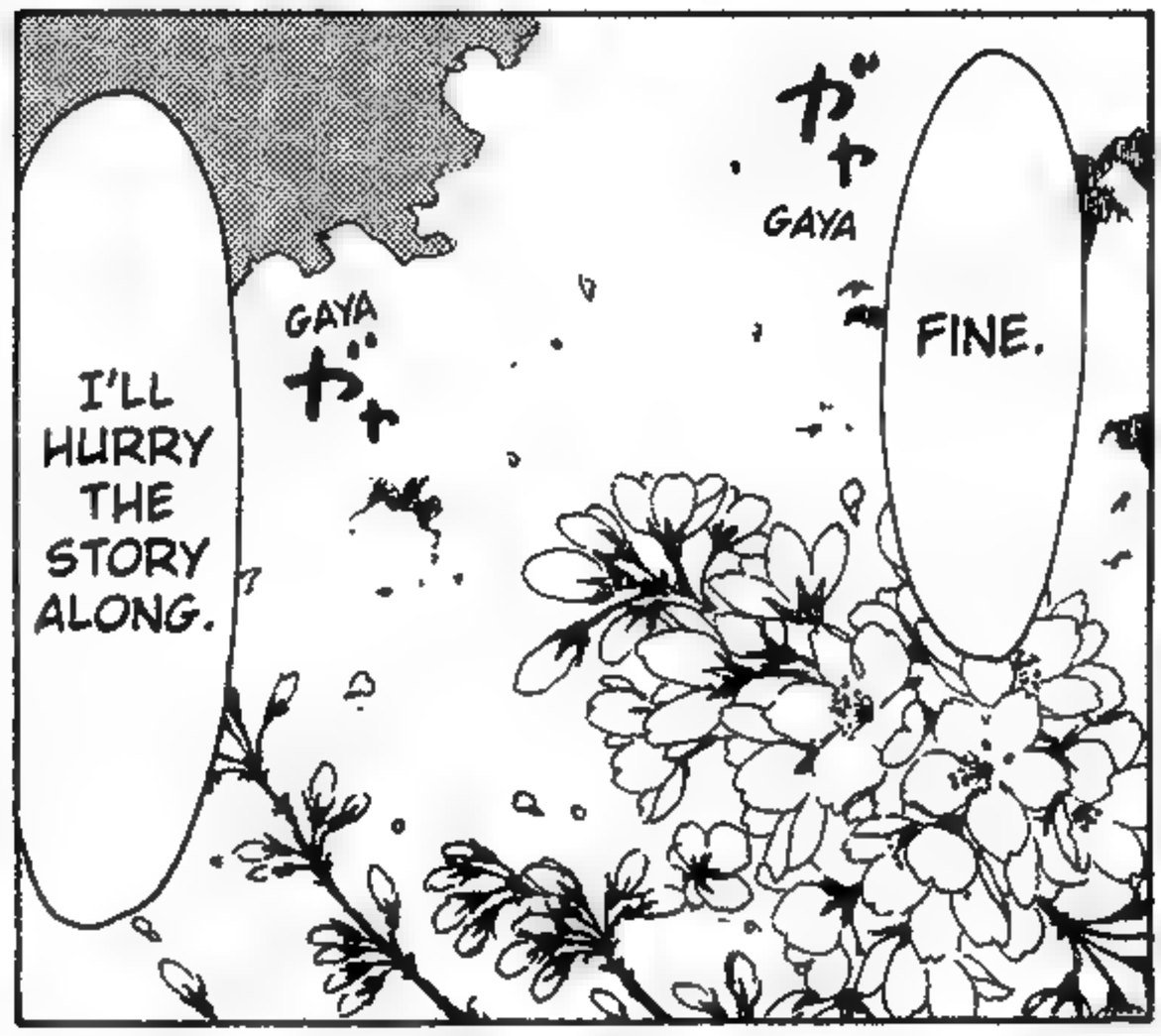
I CAN'T GUESS AT THE POSSIBLE PROFIT OR LOSS...
...BUT IF I COULD, I'D ERASE IT.
HEH!
...THAT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE AT ALL.
...

GAYA
WHAT A WEIRD THING TO SAY.
WHAT GOOD WOULD IT DO ANYONE IF I'D LOST THAT MEMORY?
GAYA

NOT THAT IT MATTERS, BUT TOMOR-ROW SHE'LL BE A SIXTH GRADER AND ELEVEN YEARS OLD.
...MY LITTLE SISTER'S BEEN INVITED OVER TO MIYOKICHI'S FOR THE DAY.
THEN, THE DAY OF THE FLEA MARKET ...
ONE MORE TANGENT ...
... THREE DAYS EARLIER, I'D HAPPENED TO BUMP INTO MIYOKICHI ON THE STREET.
NEXT TO MY SISTER, I COULDN'T HELP BUT SEE THEM AS THE "BIG SISTER" AND "LITTLE SISTER" IN A MATCHED SET OF DOLLS.
SHE'D GOTTEN EVEN MORE BEAUTI-FUL.

NO NEED TO BRAG ABOUT YOUR GIRL-FRIEND.
THIS SEEMS A BIT IRRELE-VANT.
COULD YOU TELL ME MORE DETAIL ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE?

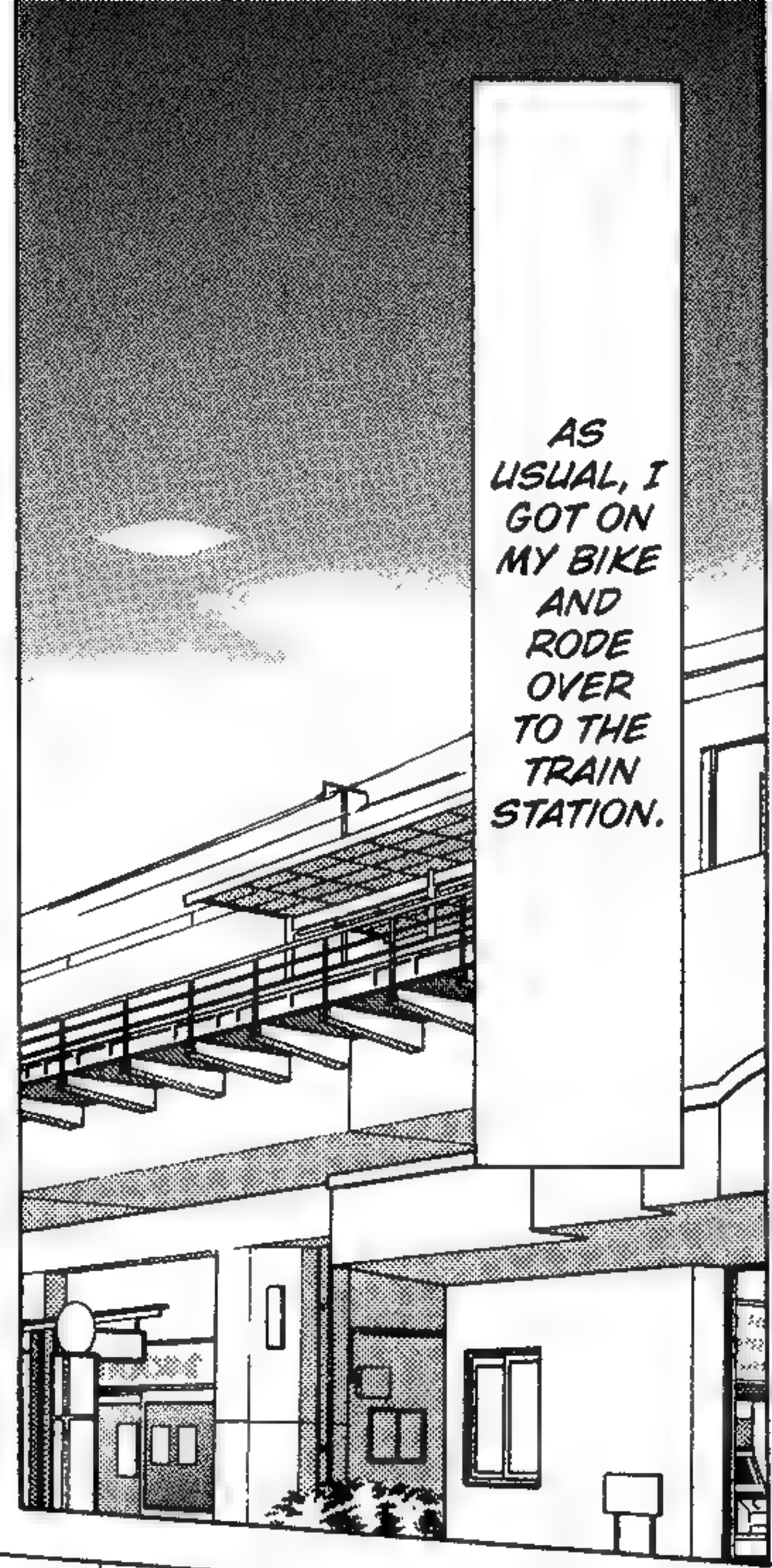
GAYA (CHATTER) ガヤ
YOU'RE BEING A LITTLE HARSH.
YOU'VE NEVER SEEN MIYOKICHI, SO IT'S EASY FOR YOU TO BE INDIFFERENT.
ガヤ GAYA


ガヤ GAYA
FINE.
GAYA ガヤ
I'LL HURRY THE STORY ALONG.

THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO HEAR.
WHAT HAPPENED THEN?

BUT AFTER THAT, YOU SHOW UP.
SO YOU SHOULD KNOW WHAT HAPPENED YOURSELF.

THAT'S RIGHT, AND THEN...
I THINK I SEARCHED FOR AN EMPTY SPOT IN THE BIKE RACKS NEXT TO THE TRAIN STATION.


AS USUAL, I GOT ON MY BIKE AND RODE OVER TO THE TRAIN STATION.

HEYA, KYON!

IT'S BEEN A WHILE, HASN'T IT.
CHA (CHAK)
KO (CLACK)
YOU GOT INTO NORTH HIGH, RIGHT?
HOW IS IT?
ARE YOU HAVING A PLEASANT HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE?

YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT, KYON.
I HAVEN'T?
WELL, NEITHER HAVE YOU.
ZA (STEP)
"OH, IT'S YOU"? WHAT KIND OF GREETING IS THAT?
OH, IT'S YOU, SASAKI.
CHA (CHAK)

IF MY PHYSICAL MEASURE-MENTS ARE TO BE BELIEVED, THERE SHOULD BE AT LEAST SOME CHANGE IN MY BODY.

IF SO, THEN I HAVEN'T MATURED A BIT.

THAT'S RIGHT, IT FELT SOME-HOW NOS-TALGIC.

SASAKI WAS ALWAYS GOING ON ABOUT OBSCURE STUFF LIKE THIS.

HEH HEH!

FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE.

BUT WHAT YOU CAN'T CHANGE IS WHAT'S INSIDE.

THE DISSOCIATION OF HARUHI SUZUMIYA I : END

"I AM HARUHI SUZUMIYA, CHIEF OF THE SOS BRIGADE! THAT IS ALL."
THE BEGINNING OF THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS IN 2-5.
SHE SEEMED TO THINK THAT WAS ENOUGH.
HARUHI SUZUMIYA DID NOT REPEAT THE WORDS SHE'D UTTERED A YEAR BEFORE.
SINCE THERE WAS NOBODY THERE WHO DIDN'T KNOW THE NAME HARUHI SUZUMIYA.
DOOON (DUUUM)
どぉぉぉん
AND I SUPPOSE IT WAS.

RE

HOTEL PRECIA
KUH!
KUH!
AFTER ALL THIS TIME.
"OH, IT'S YOU"? WHAT KIND OF GREETING IS THAT?
OH, IT'S YOU, SASAKI.
YOU GOT INTO NORTH HIGH, RIGHT?
HOW IS IT?
ARE YOU HAVING A PLEASANT HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE?
SHARARARARA (WHISHHH)
IN FACT, THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU WAS...
...WHEN WE GOT OUR DIPLOMAS TOGETHER.

YOU WENT TO SOME FANCY PRIVATE SCHOOL OUTSIDE THE CITY, RIGHT?

THE ONE THAT GETS PEOPLE INTO FAMOUS COLLEGES.

THAT'S RIGHT.

WHICH IS WHY I'VE GOTTA GO TO CRAM SCHOOL.

ANY FRIEND OF YOURS IS A FRIEND OF MINE.

I'D VERY MUCH LIKE TO SEE THEIR FACES.

COHORTS? FROM SCHOOL?

HUH, HOW 'BOUT THAT.

ZA

I'D THINK I'VE GOTTEN A LITTLE TALLER.

OH YEAH?

KYON, YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL.

ZA (STEP)

ZA

APOL-OGIES.

YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR APPEAR-ANCE IF YOU WANT TO.

THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.

WHAT YOU CAN'T CHANGE IS WHAT'S INSIDE.

ZA

...THEN WITHOUT CHANGING THE MEDIUM, THERE WON'T BE MUCH CHANGE IN PATTERNS OF THINKING OR PERCEPTION.
IF HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS IS MATERIAL IN NATURE...
NOT FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE.
たっ
TA

...BACK IN JUNIOR HIGH, SASAKI WAS ALWAYS GOING ON ABOUT OBSCURE STUFF LIKE THIS.
I REMEMBER, NOW...
THIS IS STRANGELY NOSTALGIC.
たっ
TA

たっ
TA
YOU COULD SAY THAT'S ALL THERE IS.
CHANGES IN THE WORLD EQUAL CHANGES IN IDEOLOGY.
...AS LONG AS THERE'S NO ST. PAUL-LIKE CHANGE IN DIRECTION OR COPERNICAN REVOLUTION.
AT LEAST...

WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND ANY PHENOMENA WHOSE COGNITIVE ABILITY EXCEEDS OUR OWN.

BECAUSE WE'RE HUMANS.

BUT WE KNOW INFRARED RADIATION AND DOG WHISTLES EXIST, RIGHT?

WE SIMPLY CAN'T PERCEIVE THEM.

TA たっ

TA たっ

HA HA...

I WISH YOU'D COME TO NORTH HIGH, SASAKI.

I KNOW A GUY WHO SOUNDS JUST LIKE YOU.

HA-HA, I'M HONORED.

TA たっ

TA たっ

I DON'T KNOW ANY-THING ABOUT ACTS OF GOD.

BUT I WAS TIRED OF HEARING THE WORD "COINCI-DENCE."

IN ANY CASE, SASAKI AND I CONTINUED ON TOWARD THE CLUB'S USUAL MEETING SPOT.

KYON, YOU'VE GOTTA TREASURE EVERY SINGLE SECOND ...
?
WHO'S THAT?
YOU'VE GOT SOME GUTS BEING LATE.
HUH?
... CLOSE FRIEND.
OH, THIS IS MY...
FROM OUR LAST YEAR OF JUNIOR HIGH, I SHOULD SAY.
BUT I THINK IF YOU CAN HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE WITHOUT MANY PLEASANTRIES AT ALL...
...THAT COUNTS AS A CLOSE FRIEND.

WE HUNG OUT A LOT OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL, SO...

UH, YEAH ...

I GUESS SO.

AS FAR AS I'M CON-CERNED ...

... THAT'S WHAT YOU ARE, KYON.

I WAS GETTING A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.

NUU (NNG)

.....

SFX: JII (STARE)

BECAUSE I LIVE IN THE SAME CITY SHE DOES.

AND YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY PERSON FROM OUR JUNIOR HIGH WHO WENT ON TO NORTH HIGH, KYON.

SFX: CHIRARI (GLANCE)

HEY, I DIDN'T

HOW DO YOU KNOW HARUHI?

I'M SASA-KI.

AND YOU MUST BE SUZUMIYA-SAN.

I'VE HEARD A LOT ABOUT YOU.

SASAKI.

ANYWAY ...
HE COULD'VE GONE TO A TOUGHER HIGH SCHOOL...
...BUT THAT WEIRDO WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO GET INTO A SO-SO PUBLIC SCHOOL.

TAKING IT EASY, I'LL BET.
OH, RIGHT, KUNI-KIDA.
YES, HIM TOO.
HOW'S HE DOING?

I GUESS I DON'T HAVE TO INTRODUCE MYSELF.
LIKEWISE.
GYU (SQUEEZE)
...I HEAR YOU'VE TAKEN GOOD CARE OF KYON AT NORTH HIGH.
SO, NICE TO MEET YOU.
SU (SHF)

AFTER INTRODUCING HERSELF, SASAKI HEADED OFF.

AND THEN, WE WENT TO THE CAFÉ, WHERE I PICKED UP THE BILL...

AFTER THAT, YOU KNOW THE REST.

AFTER THAT, WE WENT TO THE FLEA MARKET...

...WHERE HARUHI BOUGHT A PILE OF CRAP WE DON'T NEED.

THE ONLY GOOD PART WAS... HMM.

ASAHINA-SAN GETTING EXCITED ABOUT A KALEIDO-SCOPE, MAYBE.

WOOOW!

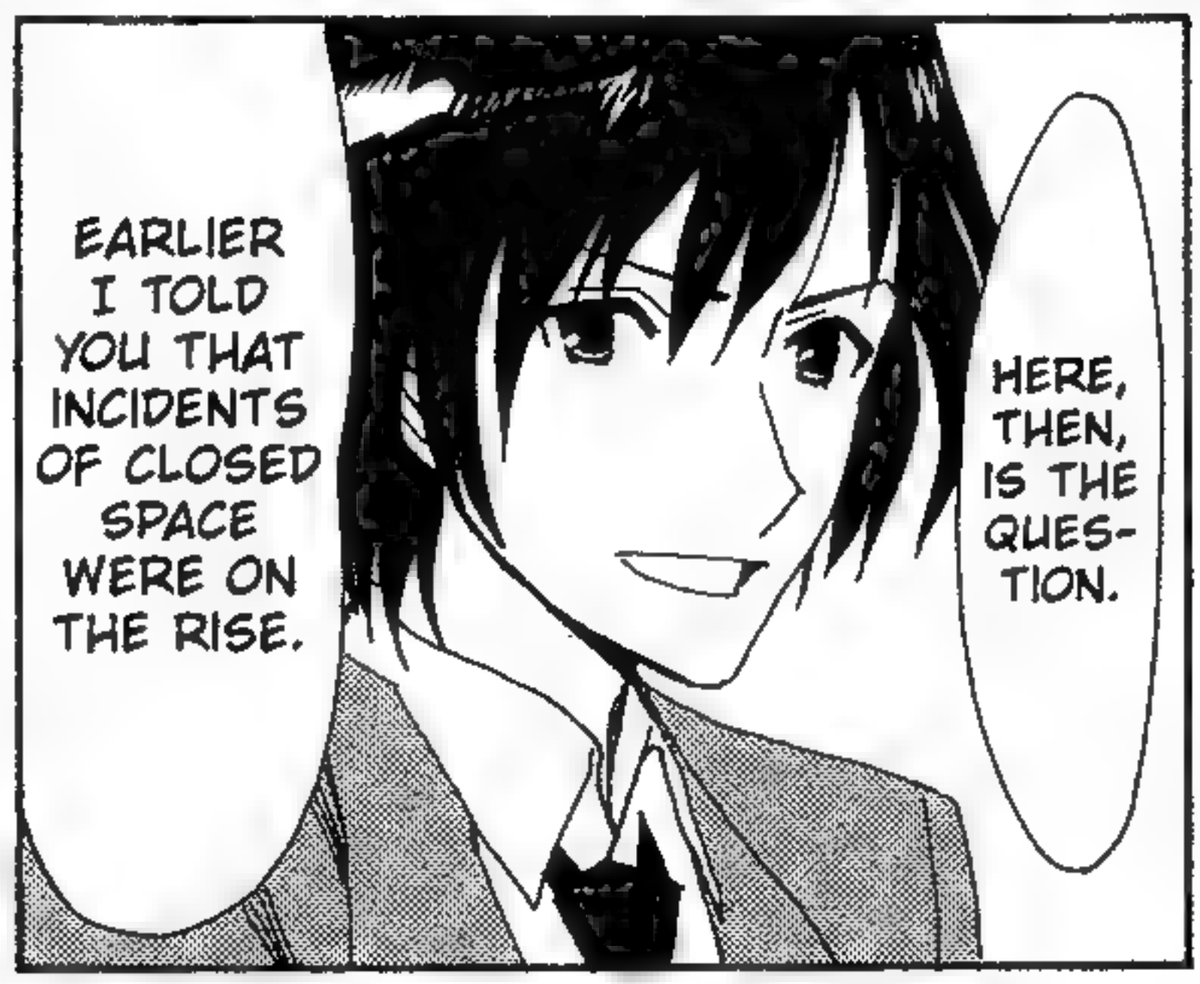
SUCH A PRIMITIVE TOY!

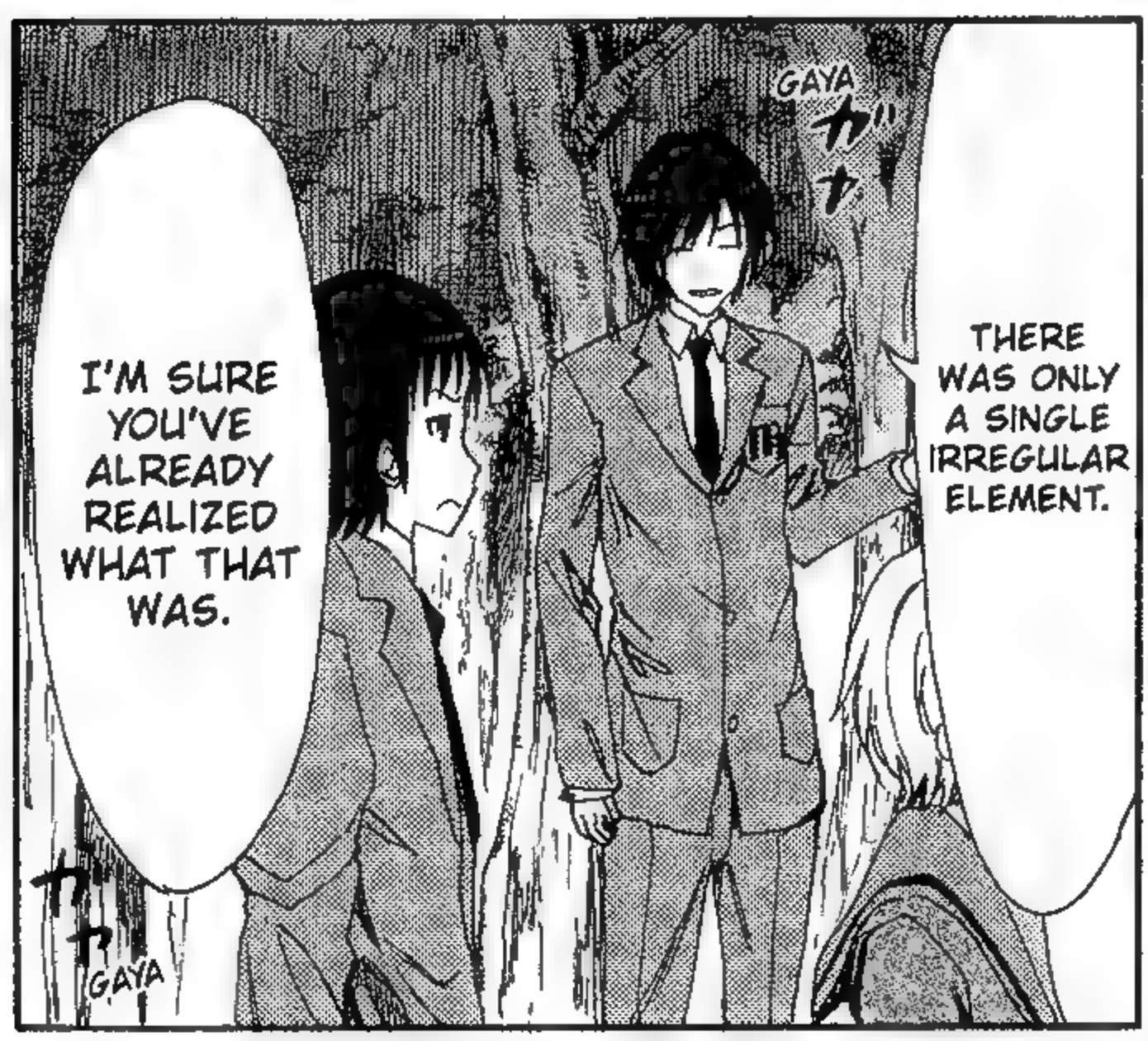
BUT IT'S SO PRETTY...

IS YOUR MEMORY OF THINGS ANY DIFFERENT?

...YOUR INTER-PRETATION AND MINE HAVE SOME SERIOUS INCONSIS-TENCIES.
GAYA
HOW-EVER ...
GAYA (CHATTER)
AS FAR AS THE OBJECTIVE EVENTS GO, YOUR EXPLANA-TION IS QUITE CORRECT.

WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE THAT IS?
EVEN THOUGH THEY HAD BEEN TRENDING DOWNWARD LAST YEAR AND INTO THIS ONE.


EARLIER I TOLD YOU THAT INCIDENTS OF CLOSED SPACE WERE ON THE RISE.
HERE, THEN, IS THE QUES-TION.


I'M SURE YOU'VE ALREADY REALIZED WHAT THAT WAS.
GAYA
THERE WAS ONLY A SINGLE IRREGULAR ELEMENT.
GAYA

BUT NOTHING ESPECIALLY MOMENTOUS HAPPENED.
WHATEVER THE PROBLEM IS, IT BEGAN ON THE FINAL DAY OF SPRING BREAK.

ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE ME SAY IT?

WHY WOULD THAT AFFECT HARUHI'S STRESS LEVELS?
BUT WHY?
GAYA

SASAKI, HUH?

IT'S BECAUSE ...
FINE, THEN.
GAYA

IT WAS TWO YEARS EARLIER, AROUND THIS TIME OF YEAR.
GAYA

...IS AN EYE-CATCHINGLY ATTRACTIVE GIRL.
... THIS GIRL SASAKI, WHO PROCLAIMED HERSELF TO BE YOUR GOOD FRIEND...

SHE HAD A CERTAIN MASCULINITY TO HER SPEECH THAT SHE ONLY EVER USED WHEN SHE WAS TALKING TO BOYS.

WHEN SHE WAS WITH OTHER GIRLS, SHE TALKED LIKE THEY DID.

IN MY LAST YEAR OF MIDDLE SCHOOL, MY MOM MADE ME GO TO CRAM SCHOOL.

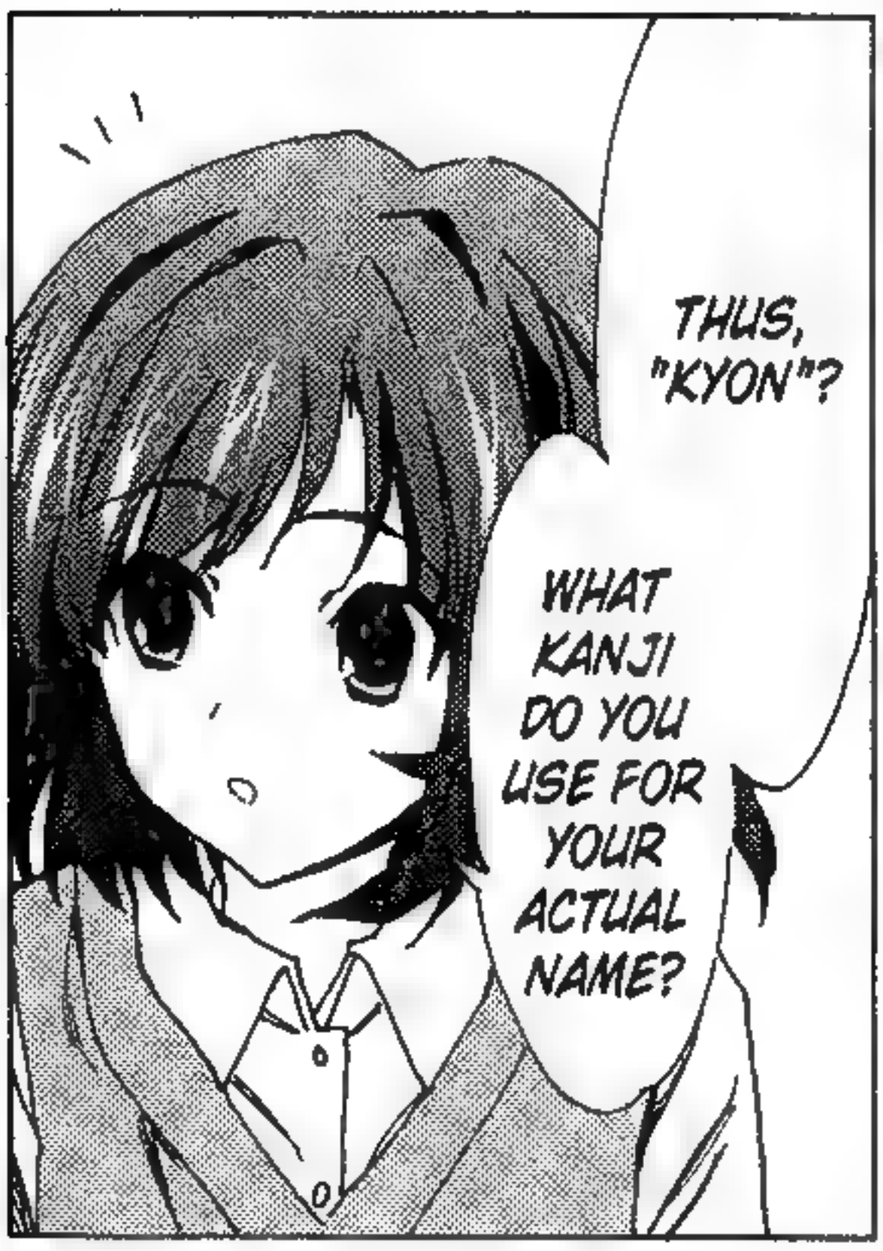
SASAKI WAS IN THE SAME CLASS.

AND SHE ALSO WENT TO THE SAME MIDDLE SCHOOL, SO WE NATURALLY STARTED TALKING.

MAYBE I WAS OVER-THINKING IT.

MAYBE IT WAS A SIGNAL NOT TO VIEW HER AS A ROMANTIC OBJECT.

MAYBE SHE DIDN'T WANT TO BE SEEN BY BOYS AS "JUST" A GIRL.


THUS, "KYON"?
WHAT KANJI DO YOU USE FOR YOUR ACTUAL NAME?

I RELUCTANTLY EXPLAINED THE EPISODE BEHIND IT, AND MY YOUNGER SISTER'S ANTICS.

KYON IS A RATHER UNIQUE NICKNAME.
HOW'D YOU GET IT?

SHE'D GUESSED THE RIGHT CHARACTERS.
I WAS SURPRISED.

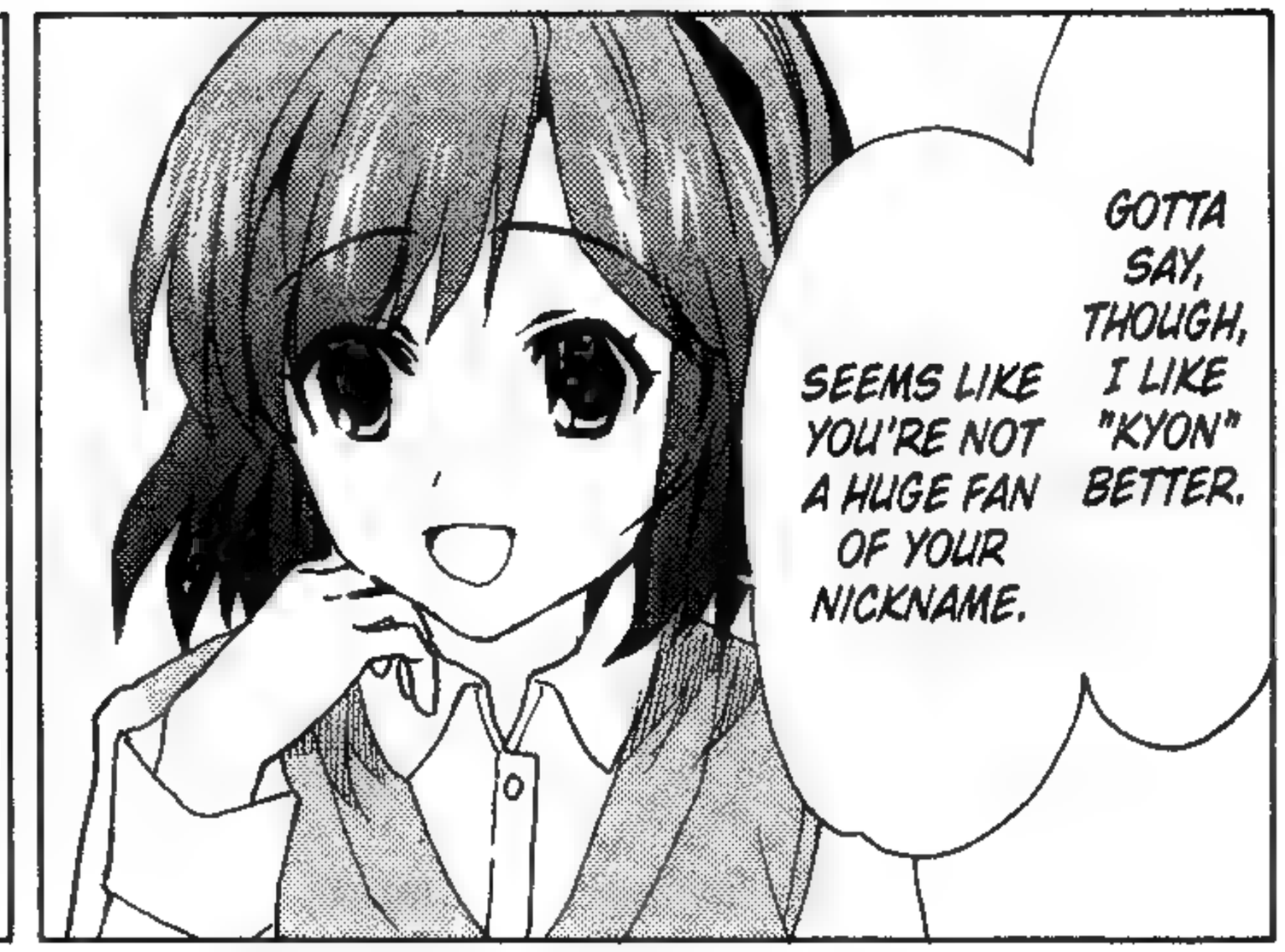
SARA (SKRIT)
SARA
SARA
IS THIS IT?
WAIT, DON'T TELL ME.

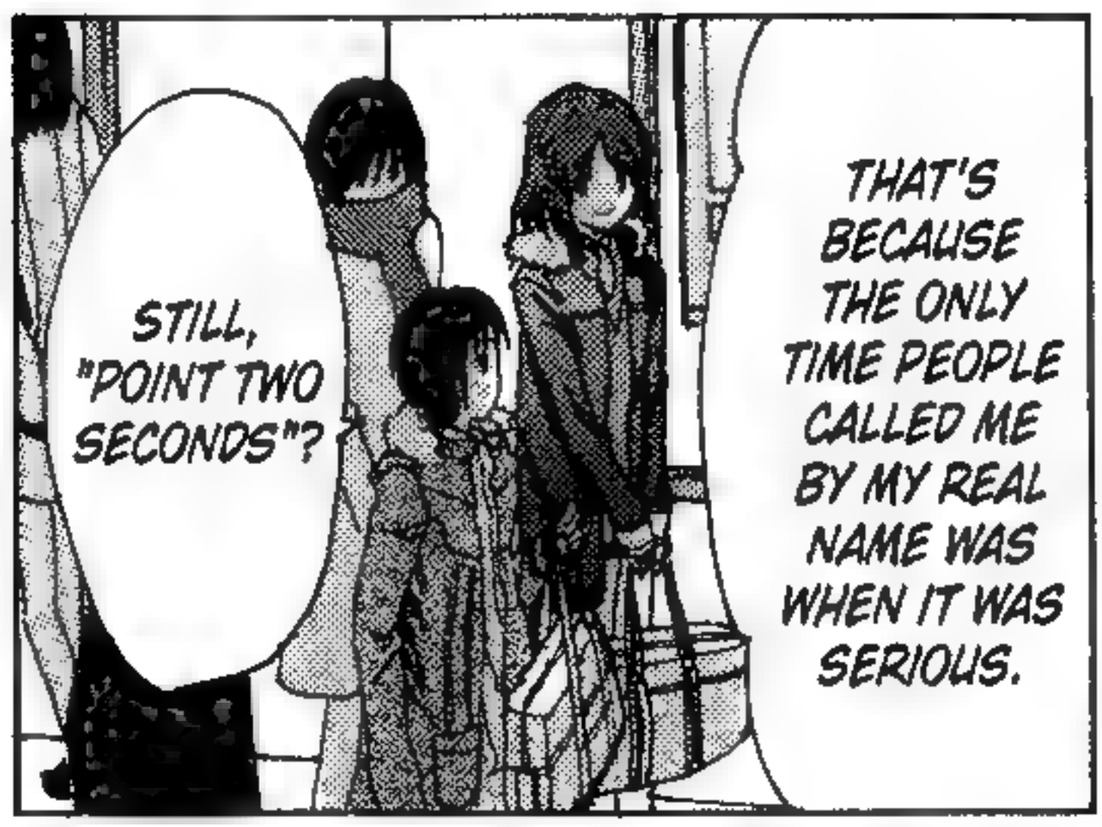
NI (GRIN)
NICE!

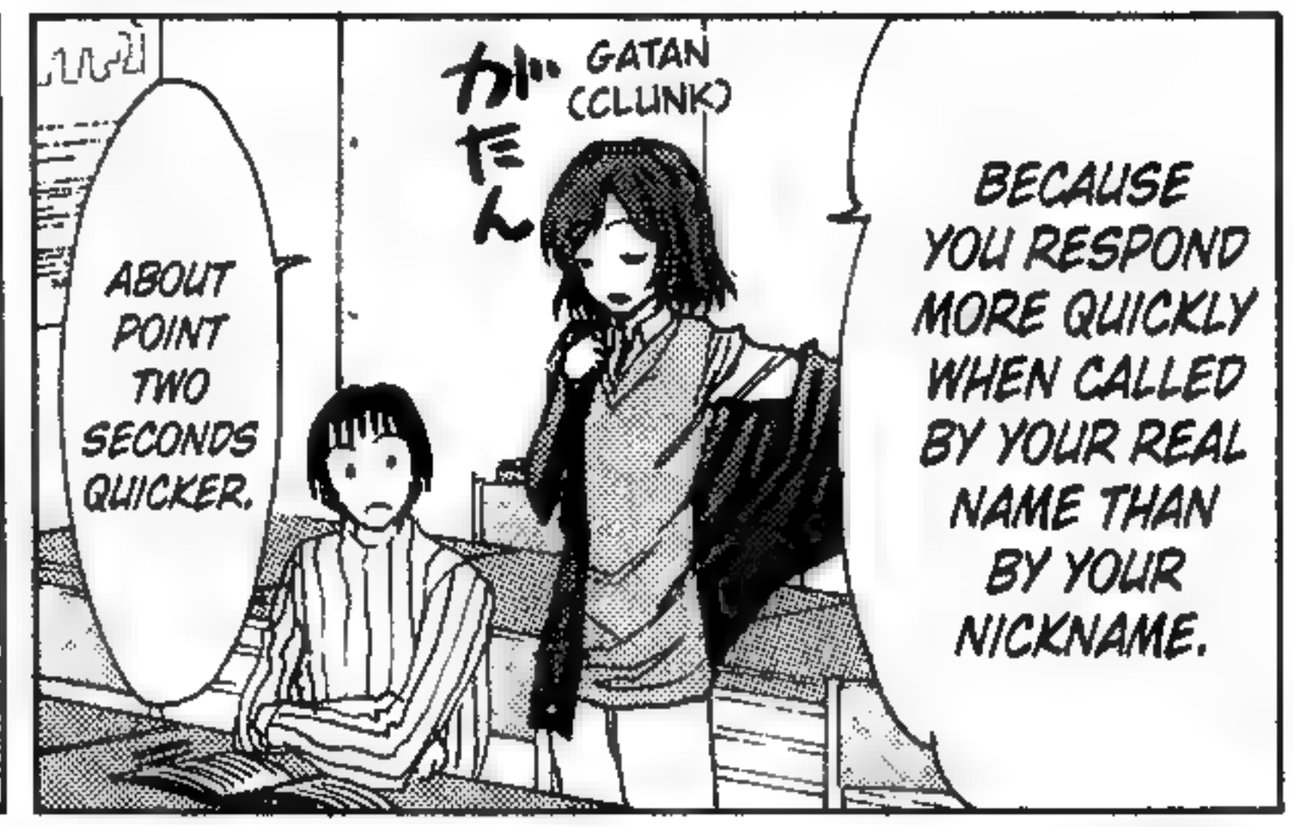
I REPEATED THE REASON MY DAD HAD GIVEN ME WHEN I'D ASKED HIM THE SAME QUESTION.

CAN I ASK HOW YOU GOT IT?
THERE'S GOT TO BE A REASON FOR SUCH A GRAND, MAJESTIC NAME.

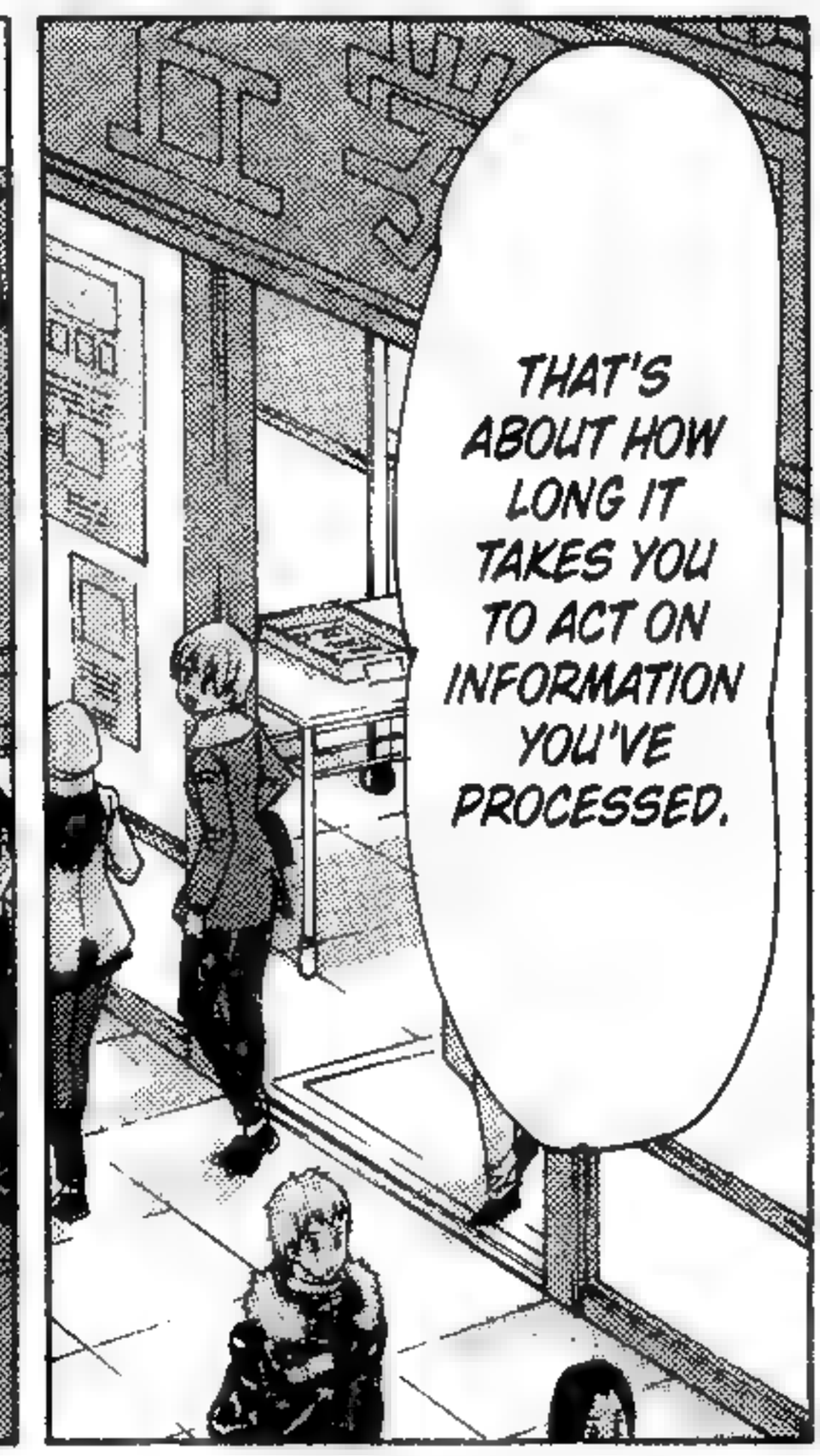
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?


SEEMS LIKE YOU'RE NOT A HUGE FAN OF YOUR NICKNAME.
GOTTA SAY, THOUGH, I LIKE "KYON" BETTER.


STILL, "POINT TWO SECONDS"?
THAT'S BECAUSE THE ONLY TIME PEOPLE CALLED ME BY MY REAL NAME WAS WHEN IT WAS SERIOUS.


ABOUT POINT TWO SECONDS QUICKER.
がたん GATAN (CLUNK)
BECAUSE YOU RESPOND MORE QUICKLY WHEN CALLED BY YOUR REAL NAME THAN BY YOUR NICKNAME.

WHICH MADE ME WONDER IF YOU DIDN'T LIKE IT, DEEP DOWN.
WHEN SOMEONE CALLS YOU "KYON," YOU'RE ABOUT THAT MUCH SLOWER.


THAT'S ABOUT HOW LONG IT TAKES YOU TO ACT ON INFORMATION YOU'VE PROCESSED.

THE SURROUNDING ATMOSPHERE ENSURED WE BOTH STUDIED SERIOUSLY.

SOON MY GRADES STARTED IMPROVING...

IT SAVED HER THE BUS FARE.

EVERY WEEK, I WOULD GO TO CRAM SCHOOL ON TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS WITH SASAKI.

THINKING BACK, I'M PRETTY SURE I'D NEVER BEEN SUBJECTED TO SO MUCH PSYCHO-BABBLE IN MY LIFE.

ALTHOUGH SHE WAS ALWAYS SAYING STUFF LIKE, "IF YOU DON'T IMPROVE YOUR GRADES MORE, YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO GO TO THE SAME COLLEGE AS SASAKI."

...WHICH CERTAINLY PROVIDED SOME RELIEF TO MY MOTHER.

WITH SASAKI FOLLOWING JUST SLIGHTLY BEHIND ME.
I'D WALK UP AT THE NIGHT SKY AS I PUSHED MY BIKE HOME
ONE'S CLASS AT THE CRAM SCHOOL WAS OUT, IT WAS FULLY NIGHT-TIME
SHE'D WAVE HER HAND AT ME
AND I'D MAKE FOR HOME.
SEE YOU AT SCHOOL TOMOR-ROW.
BYE, KYON.

IT'S LIKE A PAGE OUT OF AN INNOCENT MIDDLE SCHOOL LOVE STORY.
WAI
WAI (CHATTER)
I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE YOU'D ALREADY PROGRESSED SO FAR.

A CERTAIN SOMEONE IS LIKELY TO GET THE WRONG IDEA.
OH, CER-TAINLY. BUT I WONDER WHAT THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU THOUGHT.
WAI

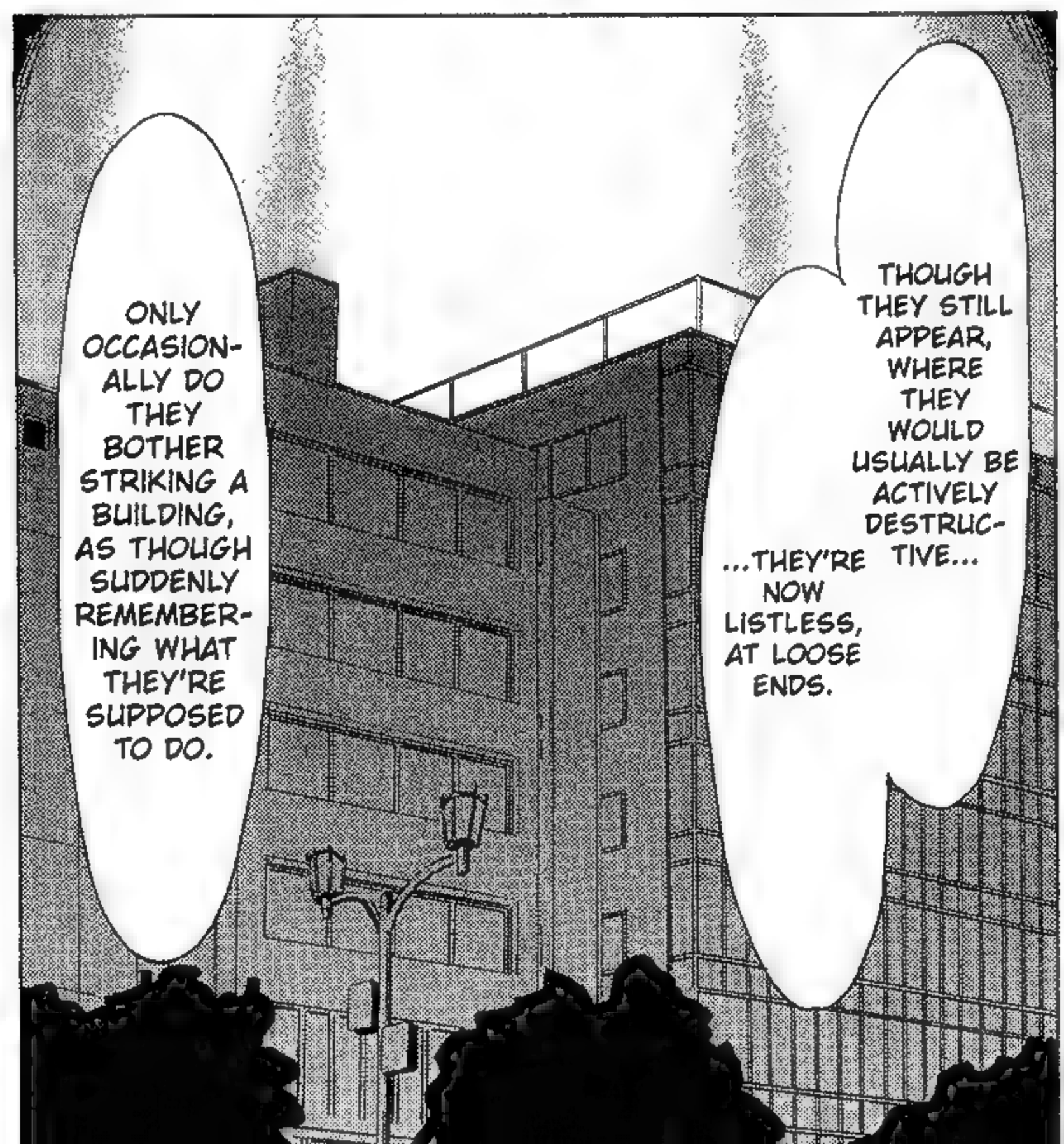
WAI
DON'T SAY THAT.
WE DIDN'T HAVE THAT KIND OF BOY-GIRL RELATION-SHIP AT ALL.

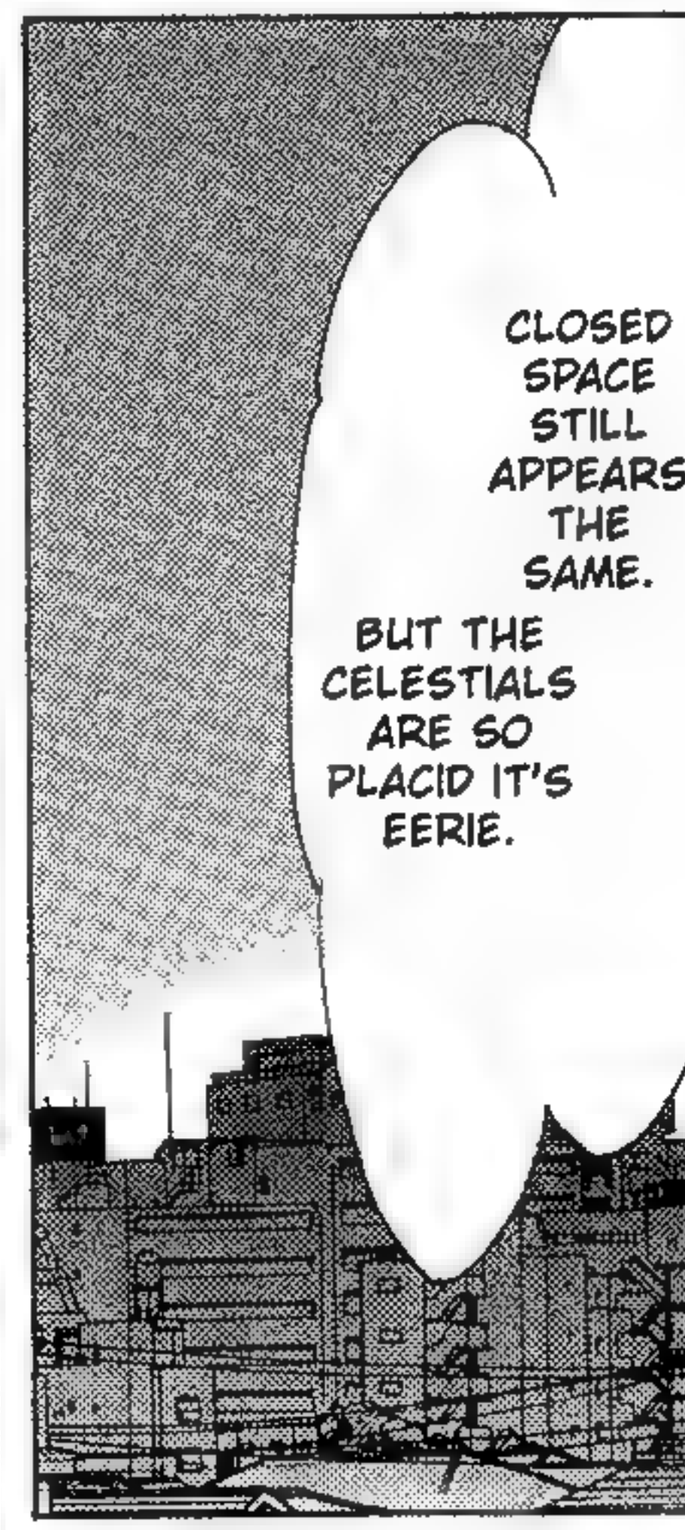
NOW THAT HE MENTIONED IT, KUNIKIDA AND NAKAGAWA HAD BOTH MISUNDER-STOOD US...
I HAD A VERY BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.

DOKA (WHUMP)
IS THIS HER SUB-CONSCIOUS, AGAIN?
...THEN GOT ALL FUZZY-HEADED?

GII (CREAK)
...HARUHI SAW SASAKI, HEARD HER REFER TO HERSELF AS MY CLOSE FRIEND...
YOU DON'T THINK ...

...RECENTLY THEIR BEHAVIOR HAS CHANGED SLIGHTLY.
REGARDING CLOSED SPACE AND THE CELESTIALS ...


ONLY OCCASION-ALLY DO THEY BOTHER STRIKING A BUILDING, AS THOUGH SUDDENLY REMEMBER-ING WHAT THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO DO.
THOUGH THEY STILL APPEAR, WHERE THEY WOULD USUALLY BE ACTIVELY DESTRUC-TIVE...
...THEY'RE NOW LISTLESS, AT LOOSE ENDS.


CLOSED SPACE STILL APPEARS THE SAME.
BUT THE CELESTIALS ARE SO PLACID IT'S EERIE.

WE MUST DESTROY THE CELESTIALS TO ELIMINATE CLOSED SPACE.

IT'S THE SAME THING.

SO WHAT'S WRONG WITH THEM ACTING RATIONALLY?

HER SUBCONSCIOUS IS WANDERING, LOST.

OR EVEN WHAT SHE SHOULD BE THINKING.

...SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT SHE'S THINKING.

IT'S AS THOUGH ...

WAI (CHATTER)

WE MUST CONCLUDE ...

...THAT SUZUMIYA-SAN'S SUBCONSCIOUS IS AT A LOSS.

WAI

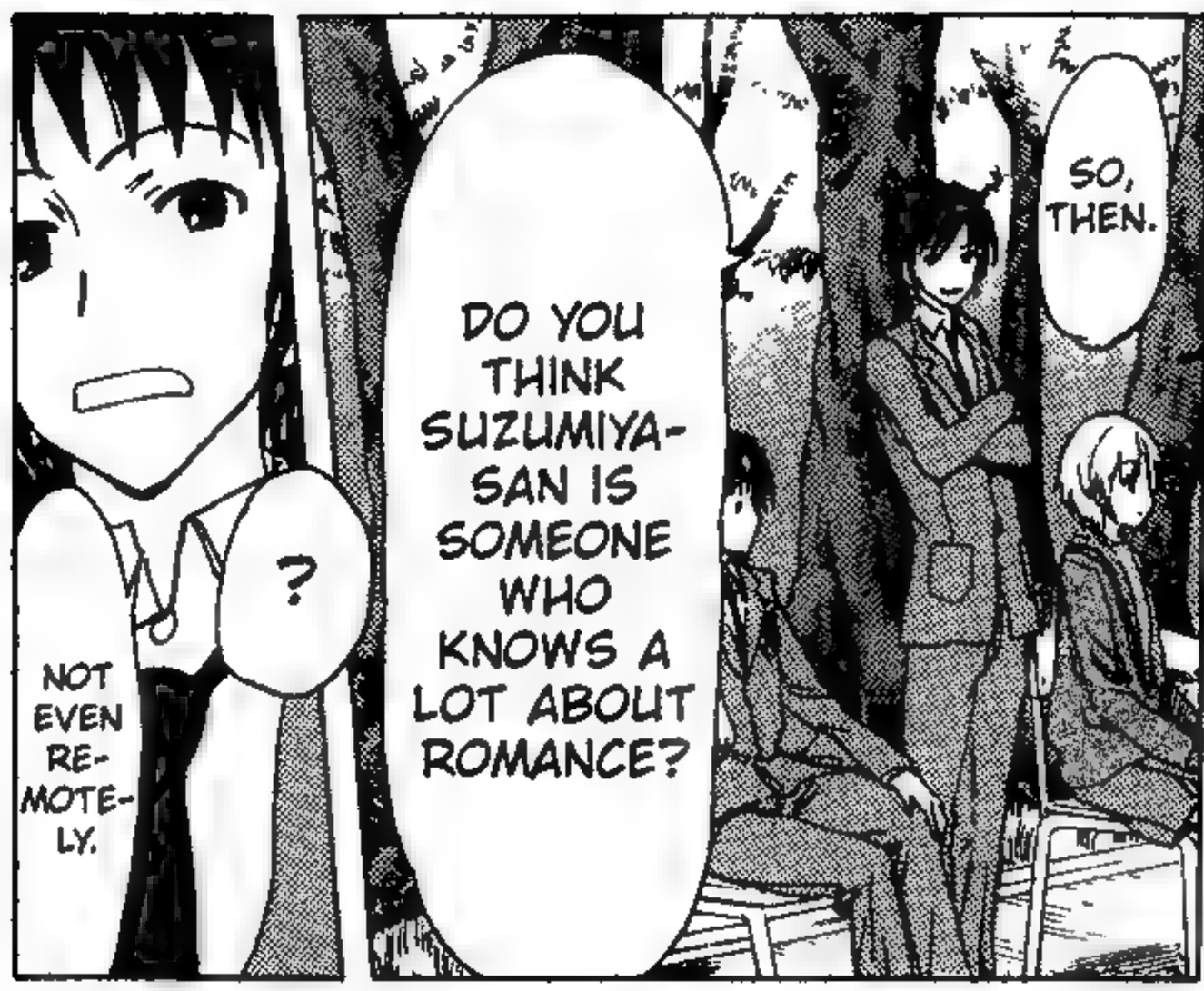
FOR MY PART, IT SEEMS OBVIOUS TO ASSUME THAT SUZUMIYA-SAN IS FEELING SOME JEALOUSY TOWARD SASAKI.

GAYA

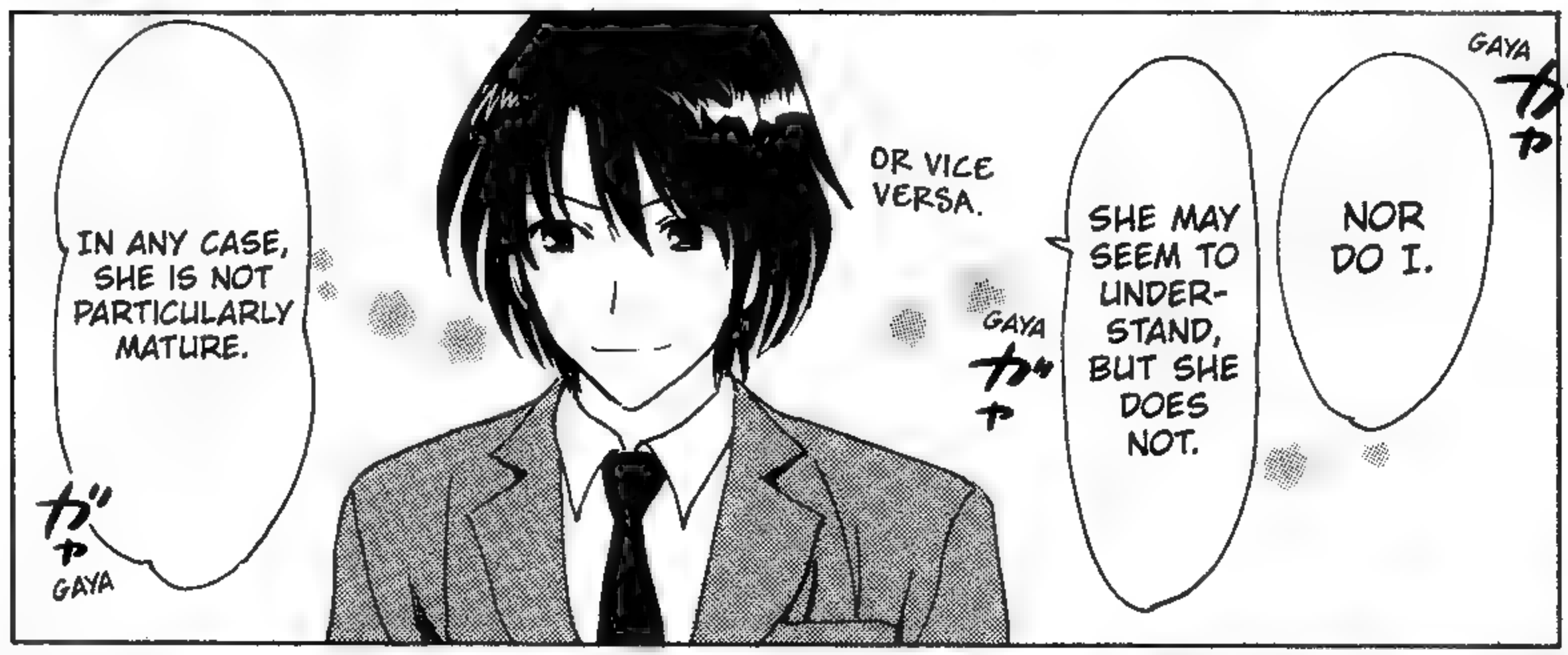
GAYA (CHATTER)

DO YOU SEE?

GAYA


?
NOT EVEN REMOTELY.
DO YOU THINK SUZUMIYA-SAN IS SOMEONE WHO KNOWS A LOT ABOUT ROMANCE?
SO, THEN.

GAYA (CHATTER)
GAYA
THAT'S ABSURD.
SHE'S THE KIND OF GIRL WHO THINKS OF ROMANCE AS A MENTAL ILLNESS, YOU KNOW.


IN ANY CASE, SHE IS NOT PARTICULARLY MATURE.
GAYA
OR VICE VERSA.
GAYA
SHE MAY SEEM TO UNDERSTAND, BUT SHE DOES NOT.
GAYA
NOR DO I.

HEH HEH...
YOU THINK SO?
...FOR YOU TO SEE THROUGH ME SO EASILY.
I MUST NOT BE MAKING ENOUGH EFFORT, THEN...

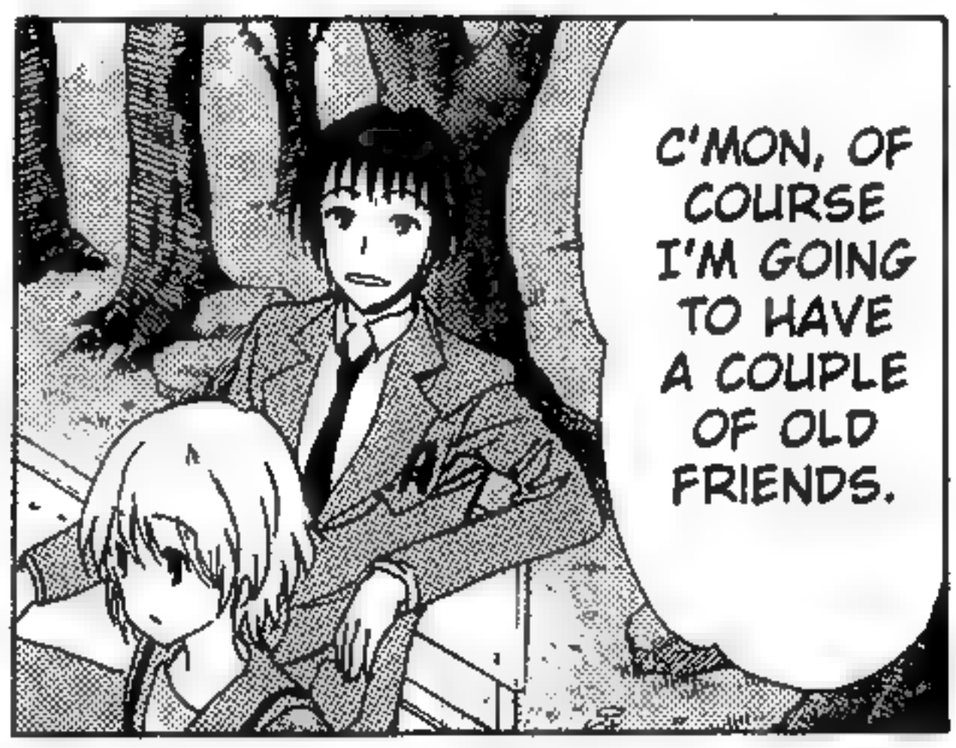
YOU'RE ONE TO TALK.
YOU'VE GOT PLENTY OF CONTRARIANISM IN YOU.

FROM THAT PERSPECTIVE AT LEAST, SHE IS A NORMAL GIRL.
SHE JUST ASSUMES RATHER CONTRARY POSITIONS AT TIMES.

LET'S CALL IT "SUR-PRISE."
IT'S NOT QUITE "JEALOUSY." IT'S MORE BASIC THAN THAT.
WAI

...ONE SHE NEVER KNEW ABOUT— HAS STIRRED UP FEELINGS WITHIN SUZUMIYA-SAN THAT SHE CAN'T EXPLAIN.
WAI (CHATTER)
TO ANA-LYZE THINGS ...
...I'D SAY THAT DISCOVER-ING YOUR OLD FRIEND...
WAI

WHAT SURPRISED HER WAS THE "CLOSE FRIEND" PART.
OF COURSE, AND SHE KNOWS THAT.
WAI


C'MON, OF COURSE I'M GOING TO HAVE A COUPLE OF OLD FRIENDS.

SO HEARING THE WORDS "CLOSE FRIEND" MAY HAVE CAUSED HER TO FEEL A CERTAIN PANG.
WHAT I THINK ...
...IS THAT DURING MIDDLE SCHOOL, SUZUMIYA-SAN WAS MOSTLY ISOLATED, OR PERHAPS EVEN LONELY.

I DON'T ...
I REALLY DON'T UNDER-STAND.

FOR EXAMPLE, SUPPOSE I HAD A FRIEND OF THE OPPOSITE SEX...
...AND SHE SUD-DENLY AP-PEAR-ED.
WAI
AND YET STILL.

WAI (CHATTER)
SHE'S SO ALOOF.
BUT THAT'S WHAT SHE WANTED.
WAI

LET'S NOT TALK ABOUT ME.
HEH HEH!
PERHAPS THAT WAS A BAD EXAMPLE.

WHAT, DO YOU?

THAT'D BUG ME.
BUT THAT'LL NEVER HAPPEN.
HOW'D HE GET BY ME, ANYWAY?

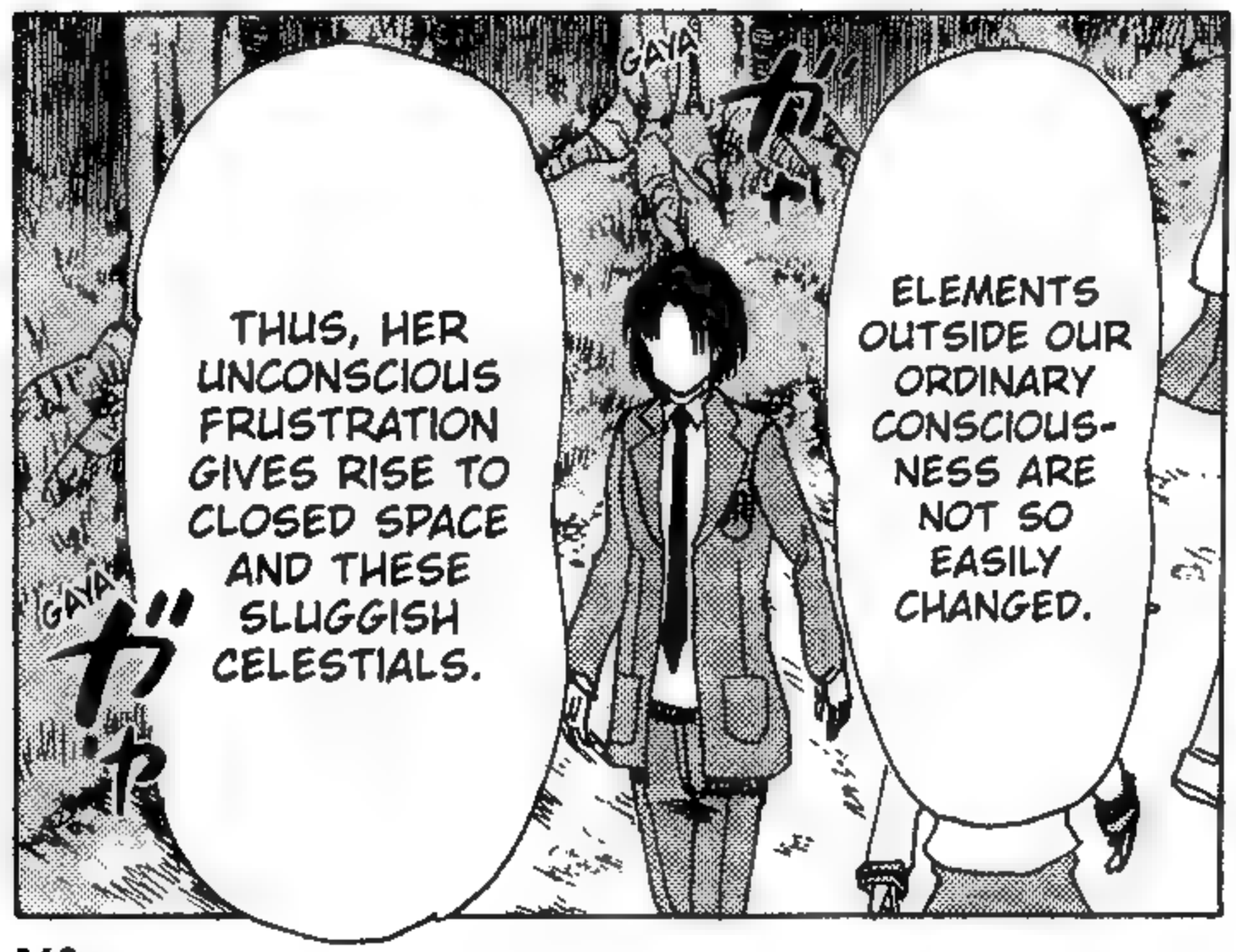
WHAT IF ASAHINA-SAN HAD A MALE FRIEND FROM HER PAST...
...WHO WAS ACTING OVERLY FAMILIAR TOWARD HER?

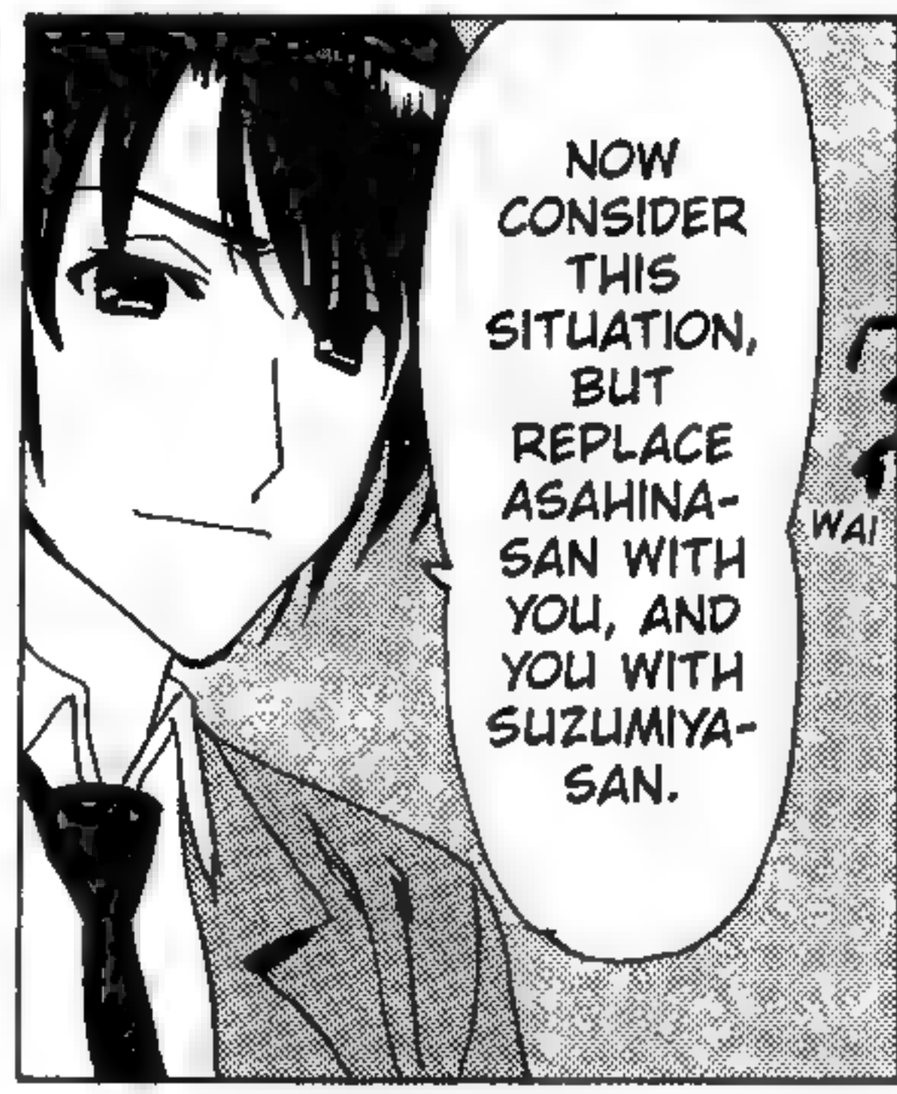
IT'S A HYPO-THETICAL QUES-TION.
HOW WOULD YOU FEEL?

ASAHINA-SAN DIDN'T COME HERE TO PLAY AROUND.
NEITHER DID NAGATO.

WAI
WAI
ASAHINA-SAN HAS NEVER APPEARED PARTIC-ULARLY AWARE OF SUCH THINGS ...
...SO BEING SUSPI-CIOUS OF HER WOULD BE RIDIC-ULOUS.
THUS, ERASING THESE FEELINGS FROM YOUR SUB-CONSCIOUS IS THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION.

I'LL BET YOU'D FEEL A STRANGE EMOTION.
NEITHER JEALOUSY NOR UNEASE, DIFFICULT TO PUT INTO WORDS.


GAYA
GAYA
ELEMENTS OUTSIDE OUR ORDINARY CONSCIOUS-NESS ARE NOT SO EASILY CHANGED.
THUS, HER UNCONSCIOUS FRUSTRATION GIVES RISE TO CLOSED SPACE AND THESE SLUGGISH CELESTIALS.


NOW CONSIDER THIS SITUATION, BUT REPLACE ASAHINA-SAN WITH YOU, AND YOU WITH SUZUMIYA-SAN.
WAI

TA (TMP)
たっ
たっ
たっ
TA
TA
...SUCH MEANS MAY YET EXIST.
AL-THOUGH ...
AND THERE IS NO OBVIOUS MEANS TO COUNTER IT.
WHILE THE ROOT CAUSE MAY SEEM CLEAR, IT IS NOT SO.
WE INVITED PEOPLE TO COME FOR ASAHINA'S ALL-YOU-CAN-DRINK TEA, BUT...
WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY LUCK AT ALL.
KYON! KOIZUMI-KUN!
DID ANYBODY INTERESTING SHOW UP?
BAAN (WHAM)
I GUESS THIS YEAR'S JUST A BAD CROP.
THE GUYS WHO STARTED LEERING AT US WERE OBVIOUSLY DIS-QUALIFIED.
AND ALL THE GIRLS RAN AWAY.
BUU (BOO)

WE'RE JUST GETTING STARTED!
BUT I'M SURE THERE'S AT LEAST ONE SUITABLE PERSON SOME-WHERE.
HARUHI'S FACE...
IN MIDDLE SCHOOL, DID YOU KNOW ANY INTERESTING STUDENTS YOUNGER THAN YOU?
KURU (TWIRL)
THERE DEFINITELY WEREN'T ANY IN MY SCHOOL, SO ANYBODY FROM EAST CENTRAL IS OUT.
HER FACE WAS SHINING WITH A BRILLIANCE LIKE THE NUCLEAR FUSION OF A TRIPLE-STAR SYSTEM.
ZA (STEP)

GI (CREAK)

GOTO (THUNK)

NOTHING TO SHOW FOR IT, HUH...

THERE JUST WEREN'T ANY FRESHMEN WITH A SPARK.

MAYBE WE'VE GOTTA EXPAND OUR SEARCH AREA.

OH YEAH?

I SORT OF THINK THE PROBLEM IS SOME-WHERE ELSE.

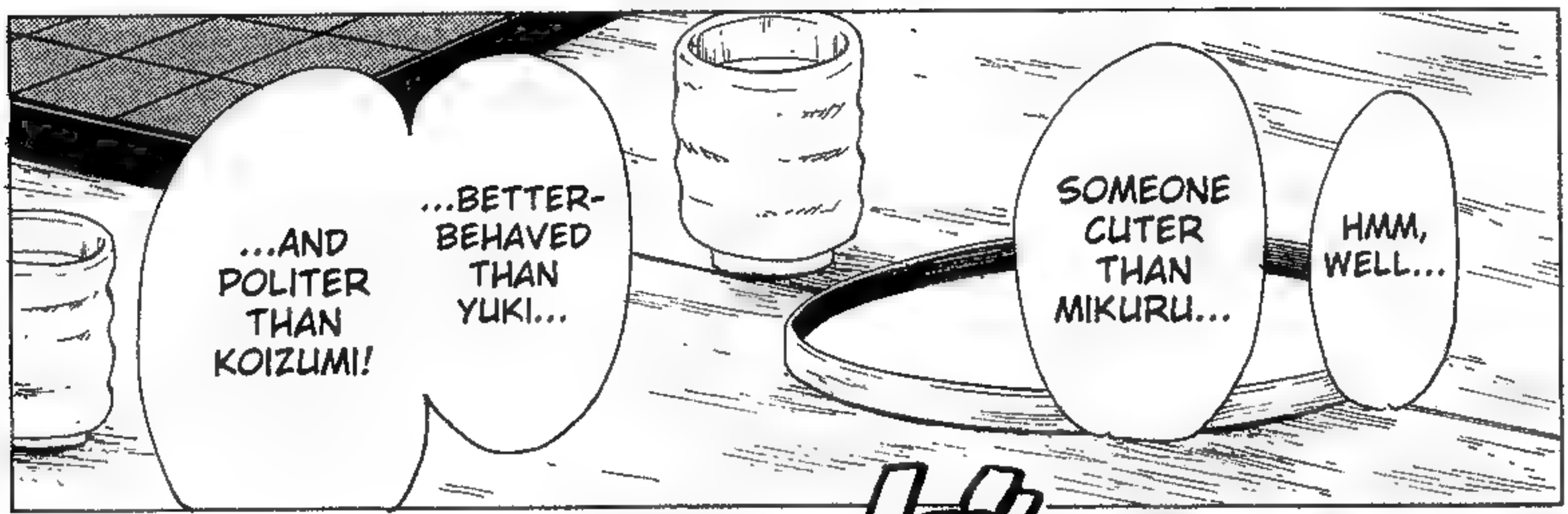
LIKE THOSE CLOTHES, MAYBE.

THEY'RE NOT GOING TO COME TO US IF WE JUST WAIT.

IT'S ALWAYS BETTER TO CAST YOUR NET WIDER, AND IN A BIGGER SEA.

WHAT KIND OF NEW STUDENT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

FUU (SIGH)
I WAS CARE-LESS.
LAST YEAR WE SHOULD'VE GONE TO ALL THE MIDDLE SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT AND RECRUITED EARLY.


...AND POLITER THAN KOIZUMI!
...BETTER-BEHAVED THAN YUKI...
SOMEONE CUTER THAN MIKURU...
HMM, WELL...

GATAN (CLATTER)
UH-UH!
THE SOS BRIGADE ADMITS ONLY A SELECT FEW!
WE HAVE NO NEED FOR CHARAC-TERS SIMILAR TO ONES WE ALREADY HAVE!

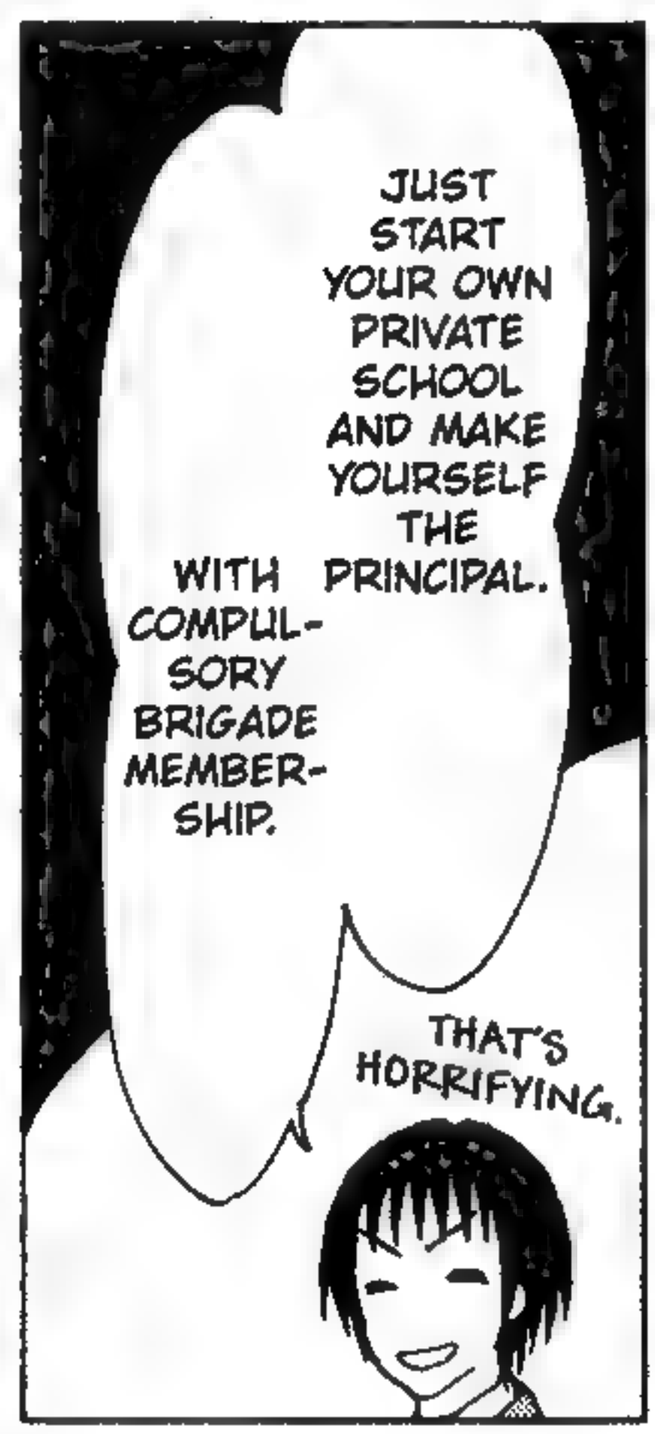
GEEZ.
THAT'S A TALL ORDER.

ARE YOU TRYING TO FIELD A FOOTBALL TEAM?
WHY DO YOU CARE WHETHER WE GET MORE MEM-BERS?

MAYBE WE SHOULD START A SATELLITE BRIGADE IN ANOTHER SCHOOL.
OR ESTABLISH A PREP BRIGADE IN A MIDDLE SCHOOL ...

WE'VE GOT TO ADVANCE ALONG WITH THE REST OF THE GLOBALIZING WORLD!
BAAAAN (BOOOOM)
OUR GOAL IS THE GLOBE!
MY SOS BRIGADE HAS TO GO WORLDWIDE!
WORLD WIDE

WE'RE NOT DOING THIS AS A COMMERCIAL VENTURE!
HA-HA, THAT'S STUPID.
(BISHI (WHIP))


JUST START YOUR OWN PRIVATE SCHOOL AND MAKE YOURSELF THE PRINCIPAL.
WITH COMPUL-SORY BRIGADE MEMBER-SHIP.
THAT'S HORRIFYING.

RATHER THAN WANTING MORE MEMBERS, IT SEEMED LIKE SHE WAS HOPING SOMEONE WOULD COME ALONG WITH A MYSTERY TO SOLVE.
SHA (WHISK)
THIS YEAR SHE SEEMED TO BE TAKING A MORE UNDERGROUND RESISTANCE-STYLE APPROACH.
NNN (HNNN)
MY GUESS WAS THIS:
NOW I HAD NO USE FOR THEM.
THOSE WERE TALES I'D ONCE WANTED TO HEAR MYSELF.
THE SOS BRIGADE COULDN'T GET ANY BIGGER.
HYUUUU (WHOOSH)

BUT AT THAT TIME, I HAD NO IDEA.
AS IT WOULD TURN OUT, MY PREMONITION WAS HALF-RIGHT AND HALF-WRONG.
HYUU (FWOO)
NOBODY COULD'VE GUESSED WHAT WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN.
NOT KOIZUMI, NOT NAGATO, NOT EVEN ASAHINA THE ELDER.
uuuuu
THE RESPONSIBLE PARTY WAS CLEAR.
WHO ELSE COULD IT BE?
BUT HARUHI SUZUMIYA.
THE DISSOCIATION OF HARUHI SUZUMIYA II : END

TO BE CONTINUED

THE MELANCHOLY OF HARUHI SUZUMIYA

16

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This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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